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LESSONS
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

From the Author.

LESSONS
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

1789-1872

BY
LORD ORMATHWAITE
/

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LESSONS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,

1789-1872.

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE remarks in his 'Démocratie en Amérique,' that however fiercely and hotly any questions of political or public policy are contested in the Union, and however obstinately parties contend for the victory, yet, that the decision of Congress once pronounced, the two opponents, both the winners and the losers, seem equally to accept the decision as final, and do not endeavour to continue or revive the controversy. This result is a natural consequence arising in part from their Democratic institutions. The real motive of all these party conflicts is a contest for the possession of political power ; measures and systems of policy are merely the battle-ground upon which they wage their war, and of little more value in the eyes of either combatant after the fight is over, than is the ground on which were fought the battles of Waterloo, Sadowa, or Sedan. When we bear in mind that this contest for political power is the primary motive of the struggle, and that the consequences of the policy are subordinate considerations, we may easily understand that the party which has just sustained defeat in this arena may not feel it advisable to renew the struggle upon exactly the same ground ;

Intro-
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remarks.

they will probably consider it expedient to take up a new position, and to renew the campaign on an untried soil.

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Although, however, this result is natural enough to those who view politics merely as a game, the case is widely different where the subject is elevated into the character of political science, and is regarded in a more comprehensive spirit. Politics then assume the character of a branch of Experimental Philosophy, and political inquiries are guided on the principles, and are subject to the laws, which regulate other branches of experimental science. Viewed under this aspect there must be necessarily two stages in the adoption of any new laws, or social or political changes. The first of these stages must be the *à priori* grounds upon which the statesman is induced to make the experiment, for all new and untried political changes are necessarily of the nature of experiments. In arguments however strong, the reasons however specious which may lead to the adoption of any novel policy, must want the conclusive proof which experience can alone afford. The first stage, therefore, in this process must necessarily be speculative, and the second stage must follow in which it can be traced how far the effects predicted have followed the adoption of those means which were anticipated as calculated to produce them. In order to convince us of the truth of these propositions it is only requisite to admit that all changes in social or political institutions are necessarily experiments, and that in all Experimental Philosophy there must

inevitably be these two stages: the first in which the novelty is introduced with a view to certain anticipated results, the second in which the truth of the theory is verified, or its error exposed by actual experience; and if this be the case, these two stages are inseparable from the very idea of experimental science. A new experiment necessarily assumes that its results, however predicted by previous researches, have not yet been demonstrated by fact, and require that demonstration by fact in order fully to establish them. A whole history of the experimental sciences—chemistry, medicine, mechanics, and every other branch—teems with illustrations; in short, all these sciences are entirely made up of conclusions drawn from the combined results of these two processes. Ingenuity suggests, invention pioneers, actual experiment ratifies and confirms: very often indeed the experiment leads to an opposite result, and discloses some hidden fallacy. It is so utterly impossible to foresee all the results and bearings of untried schemes, that human wisdom and foresight can never attain certainty, except after actual experience. The paths of science are everywhere strewn with the wrecks of abortive projects and plans, many of them presenting the fairest prospects of success, but doomed to failure from the operation of some slight cause, which nothing but actual experiment could have detected.

If such should be constantly the case in purely scientific inquiries where no passions are excited, and where nothing need interrupt the calm pursuit of truth, how much more necessary is it to adhere to

those principles in determining questions which are not resolved by pure reason alone, but which inflame the passions and involve the interests of the whole social community. Yet it is precisely this class of questions which are always escaping the ordeal of subsequent verification. Political changes once effected pass into the domain of *faits accomplis*, and no reference is made to the arguments originally alleged in favour of their adoption, or to the degree of weight which the light of subsequent events has shown was due to the objections urged against them.

We may adduce, by way of example, the first Reform Bill of 1832, one of the greatest social revolutions ever effected in England, and which had been opposed by a long array of the greatest statesmen, lawyers, authors, and political philosophers, that this or any other country ever produced. Yet Sir Robert Peel, one of the ablest practical statesmen of his age, who had led the vanguard of opposition to the measure, considered it his wisest policy to accept it, in his own words, 'as the final settlement of a great Constitutional question.' Under his authority, the consequences which have flowed from its adoption have never been traced or questioned, although it is clear that the advantage which he hoped to obtain by his reticence has proved wholly illusory. I think I may venture to draw the conclusion, that Party expediency and political science are two very different things. The aim of political science, like that of all other science, is a discovery of truth ; and

it would be often quite as necessary to seek it by retracing our steps, and exposing past errors, as by endeavouring to condone them in the future. It is clear that this policy of submitting unreservedly to this law of *faits accomplis* turns entirely to the profit of that party which, under the various designations of the Party of Movement, the Party of Progress, or the Party of Revolution, has for forty years been triumphant in the history of this country. If their measures were never to be criticised or questioned after they are passed, it is quite clear that a principal engine of political opposition is surrendered.

It is not, however, with any direct reference to our own domestic policy of late years that I have made these remarks, but rather with the view of applying them to those mighty events of which Continental Europe has so lately been the scene, and to which they apply with even greater force than to our own. Eighty-three years have now elapsed since the outbreak of the first French Revolution, an epoch which must always be regarded as the starting-point from which all the subsequent political changes which have taken place in Europe have emanated. Nor do I at all except our own nation from the influence which has embraced the whole of Continental Europe. For the first forty years of this period we, indeed, were engaged in successfully resisting it; for the last forty years we have been undoing our previous work, and following, with a somewhat hesitating and timid step, in the wake of Continental

Application of these remarks to the first French Revolution.

Revolution. No one of M. de Talleyrand's many pointed and sagacious remarks was ever more just than that which he made when ambassador to our Court in 1832: 'That the French plunged into the Revolution all at once, and that the English were going into it step by step.'

European
opinion
on the
first
French
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tion.

It is, however, with Continental Europe that I am at present engaged. European opinion, after the many storms and convulsions which accompanied and followed that great event, has settled down into regarding it in somewhat the following manner. It is universally considered as the great source from which all the various shades of what are now called Liberal opinion have sprung, and as opinions more or less Liberal have been in the ascendant during the last half century, there has been a disposition to forget its horrors, to extenuate its crimes, and to defend its principles. The impressions even of the most moderate politicians may be thus described: they look back to the outbreak of 1789 as to the explosion of a pent-up volcano, the violence of which was due to the vicious institutions which had so long stifled its fires, and prevented its easy and natural vent. They looked upon the whole system of society which preceded it as thoroughly unsound, and accumulating wrong and oppression upon the great bulk of the nation for the benefit of a few privileged classes. They considered that the old society was saturated with abuses of every description. They regarded the objects of their great Revolution as legitimate, and fraught with benefit to the whole

human race. They viewed all the popular violence, all the subversion of every principle, whether civil or religious, all the wholesale overthrow of every existing institution as a temporary and transient evil, which was fully compensated by the birth of a healthier society, and by a regeneration of mankind. We find constantly in the works of writers by no means of the Republican type, and in the language of statesmen who profess to uphold the cause of order, such expressions as 'the great principles of our first French Revolution,' 'the glorious year of 1789,' and similar tributes to that period as having been the inauguration of a new and improved civilisation among mankind. The Revolution they consider as a period of transient evil, giving birth, however, to enduring good; and that the world was, upon the whole, very much the better for its occurrence. Such were the feelings of complacent indulgence with which the great body of Frenchmen at least, and, perhaps, of Liberal politicians of all countries, had brought themselves to regard the Reign of Terror, the overthrow of the Christian religion, and the proscription or massacre of all the upper classes of society. Those who doubted these conclusions, and who still looked upon the first French Revolution and its consequences with distrust or hostility, were overpowered by the general prevalence of these opinions, and silenced by the chorus which re-echoed the sentiments I have just described. Even in England, which had been the great adversary of all the doctrines of the Revolution of 1789,

a great change stole over us after our own Reform era of 1830. Although Liberalism with us assumed a milder form, yet from that period it became in the ascendant here; and however the more moderate disciples of that school might qualify their opinions, and permit themselves to censure the excesses of the Reign of Terror, yet they could not altogether repudiate or condemn that movement in Europe which had been the parent of all modern Liberalism.

Soundness
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It appears to me that the time has arrived when this verdict must be changed. Events have pronounced too strongly in favour of the principles of Conservatism to permit those who profess them to acquiesce any longer, or persist in the timid policy of silence. We are called upon to speak out boldly, and to assume what the French call 'the courage of our opinions.' Facts speak for themselves; they are written upon the wall. Are we to refrain from pointing the finger to their significance, or to read the lesson which they teach to Civilisation?

First
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the desire
in France
for politi-
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arising
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follow the
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In the early part of the eighteenth century the example of England had given a great impulse to political thought on the European Continent. The two ablest French writers of that period, Voltaire and Montesquieu, had imbibed a warm admiration for the character of our institutions. The advance which we made, after the wars of Marlborough, to the rank of a first-rate power, while it roused the jealousy, fired the emulation of the French people. Although the military spirit of the nation and the ascendancy of the Court had completely choked all

the elements of constitutional freedom or independence in France, yet still the traces of them did exist, as indeed they are to be found wherever the feudal system had existed. The desire to revise this was the first cause of that movement among the French people, which ultimately led to the Convocation of the States-General in 1789. It was an exceedingly rational, wise, and patriotic aspiration ; and could the movement have been confined within the limits which were probably originally contemplated by its first projectors, it would have been a blessing to mankind, both in the benefits which it would have conferred, and the calamities which it would have avoided. But the fiery impetuosity of the French character soon led the nation, like a runaway steed, far beyond all bounds of reason and moderation. They were, in the first instance, stimulated by the desire to copy our institutions, but, by the first acts of the Assembly of 1789, they not only disregarded and set them aside, but adopted principles diametrically opposite to ours.

The fundamental basis of our English Constitution was, that it was really a mixed form of Government—that it was a Government of King, Lords, and Commons ; and this division of power was no fanciful theory, no Constitution which existed merely upon paper, or in the pages of De Lolme. It is true that its action was not always apparent, or the springs which moved it visible, or indeed intelligible to a foreigner. These three principles were curiously blended and intertwined with each other. Like the

First principle of the English Constitution—its mixed character.

functions of the great organs of life in the human body—the heart, the stomach, the lungs, or the brain—the most skilful political anatomist could not always trace with distinctness their separate operation ; but he knew generally, and with certainty, that their functions were all combined, that they produced an harmonious result, and that the influence of these three great elements in all really civilised society was happily, although somewhat irregularly, apportioned. No one who is really acquainted with the working of the British Constitution from 1688, and, perhaps, from an earlier period, can question the correctness of this view.

The feudal
system
contains
the germ
of freedom.

One great cause of the success with which we had united these three great component parts was, that instead of proclaiming, as the French Revolutionists did, a crusade against all the institutions and ideas which sprang from the feudal system, our whole Constitution was one adaptation of what we had inherited from that system to the changes wrought by time ; the groundwork at once of the subordination and the freedom of society was alike feudal.

The French Revolution, which made war upon everything feudal, and violently uprooted the aristocratic element wherever it could be traced, whether in political institutions, or in social manners, was from its very commencement diametrically opposed to the very existence of English laws, institutions, and to the whole framework of our society.

It has been sometimes maintained that all the first

steps of the Constituent Assembly were characterised by wisdom and moderation, and that its failures, and the subsequent evils and calamities of the Revolution, were owing to the popular excesses in the Reign of Terror. Such an opinion I regard as utterly erroneous. The first mistakes after the meeting of the States-General led to all the miseries which followed, by an almost inevitable sequence; nay, these first errors are in their effects still destroying liberty, order, and civilisation in Europe. I will quote two great authorities in confirmation of my own views. Mr. Burke, in his immortal work on the French Revolution, notices with respect M. Mounier and M. de Lally Tollendal, who were conspicuous in the first Constituent Assembly as the heads of a small party who advocated the adoption of the British Constitution, and of two Chambers, one of Peers and one of Commons. He remarks that he does not confound these moderate and enlightened politicians with the partisans of Anarchy and Revolution who led the Assembly, but he observes that he considers that they had in their ancient form of government, viz. the Three Estates—nobles, clergy, and people—the elements of a very excellent Constitution, and that it would have been far better to have adopted them than to have sought to imitate ours. The other authority to which I would refer is, in my mind, a very important one—it is the Emperor Napoleon I. In one of his conversations with Las Casas at St. Helena, the name of M. Necker was mentioned, and Napoleon observed, ‘I consider

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M. Necker to be the cause of all the miseries of the French Revolution, by consenting to the double vote of the Tiers État.' This threw all the power into the hands of the Democracy, and led to all the subsequent disasters. Las Casas observed in reply, 'That if the French Revolution had not taken place, France would not have enjoyed a period of great happiness and glory.' Napoleon replied, 'You mean my reign ; but France would have escaped great calamities.'

The justice of these remarks, both of Napoleon and of Mr. Burke, is acquiring additional force by every day's experience of the progress of events. If France had adhered in 1789 to her national constitution of Three Estates, a balance might have been preserved, and the interests of the different classes of society might have been protected, while rational liberty would in all probability have been established ; but when M. Necker conceded a point which gave the whole numerical superiority to the Democracy, and when the two other Estates, by uniting with the Tiers État, formed a Constituent Assembly, constituting one sole democratic governing body, all the remaining institutions of the country were placed under its foot, and the Monarchy ceased to exist virtually, as it did nominally, two years afterwards. The excesses of the Reign of Terror produced a partial reaction, but, before anything like the semblance of order could be restored, the whole framework of society had been broken to pieces, religion destroyed, and anarchy reduced to a code.

It has been generally believed, that the Reign of Terror, with its massacres and executions, its torrents of innocent blood spilt upon the scaffold, its subversion of all religious worship, was but the temporary insanity of a people transported to madness by their sudden emancipation from what was depicted as a state of the most galling oppression, and excited to desperation by the attacks of combined Europe. This frenzy, it was supposed, had passed away never to return, and leaving the country free to adopt all the measures of progressive improvement which the growing intelligence of the age dictated. The light which subsequent events, and very recent ones also, has shed upon these theories, has painfully awakened us to a sense of their fallacy. The poison with which France was inoculated during that disastrous epoch, has never been eradicated. It has been crushed down; it has been stamped upon; it has been denounced by the wise and virtuous of all parties; it has been supposed extinct, yet it reappears whenever the bonds of society are at all relaxed, or the hand of power enfeebled. What was the Paris insurrection of June 1848, with its Red Republican flag raised in opposition to the tricolour? What was the overthrow of the Empire, in September 1870? and what, above all, have been the recent exploits of the Commune, in May 1871, but a revival of all the worst principles of the school of Robespierre and Marat? This was not concealed but avowed during the whole period, from the overthrow of the Orleans dynasty, in

The spirit and principles of Jacobinism constantly re-appearing in every subsequent convulsion.

the beginning of 1848, to the establishment of the Second Empire, in December 1851. Clubs were established in every part of Paris, in which revolutionary orators uttered speeches in praise of Robespierre, and, under the name of Marianne, eulogised the guillotine.

The three principles of modern Red Republicanism identical with those of the ancient Jacobinism.

During twenty years the vigour and firmness of the Second Empire guarded France from the danger involved in the triumph of these doctrines; but no sooner was that power overthrown, and in consequence of the reverses which attended the Imperial arms, than Jacobinism again appeared more formidable and more fanatical than ever, and brought the very existence of civilised society to the brink of annihilation. What are the doctrines, the principles, and the organisation of the Internationale but a new form of Jacobinism? What is the creed of the Red Republic but a summary of its principles?

The faith of the Red Republic is contained in three articles: the *first* is a profession of the absolute and entire equality of all mankind, and the hostility of the Red Republic to all kings, to all nobles, and titles, and distinctions of every kind, which shall infringe upon that perfect equality. The *second* of these articles is the abolition of all religious professions of faith, and all public worship whatever. The creed of the Red Republican is Atheism, but he does not directly interfere with the private convictions of individuals; he is only opposed to any public or collective act of religious worship. The *third* article in the Red Republican code is the confiscation of all

property to the uses of the State. Private property is denounced as a usurpation and a robbery. The State alone is to be the great owner of property, and to undertake the duties of its distribution, so as to maintain the whole nation in a state of perfect equality.

It is lowering to the pride of human reason, that such a profession of principles should be really descriptive of the opinions and purposes of large and influential classes of the French nation. It is melancholy to know that they should be maintained not merely by small sects like the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, or the Mormons of Utah, but by powerful bodies of the leading nation of Continental Europe. Those who enter the lists in opposition to the champions of these theories, will find that they have to deal with antagonists not only inspired with a wild enthusiasm, but gifted with great ingenuity and ability, enlisted in defence of these extravagant doctrines. When once men desert the guide of experience, when they cease to consider human society, as built upon the certain principles existing in human nature itself, and when they suppose that they can reconstruct the world in accordance with their own views, there is no practical absurdity which their lively imaginations will not coin sophistries to defend. Experience never teaches them, the ruin of a thousand abortive schemes only stimulates them to construct the thousand and first, and they are ever ready to stake the very existence of society on the success of the last new scheme.

There are certain actions which those who are termed the advanced school of politicians hold as the basis of their code of principles. The first is, that all-existing governments are founded upon error, usurpation, and corruption; that they sacrifice the many to the benefit of the few; and that no arguments in their favour derived from prescription are entitled to a moment's attention. Existing society must, according to them, be entirely uprooted and reared anew from its very foundations on a totally different system. According to them the State must govern all and distribute everything. Every detail of life, every business, every employment, the whole machinery of civilised life, must be regulated according to the despotic authority of this anonymous sovereign, which they call the State, and they anticipate universal happiness, and an emancipation from all evils which afflict humanity, from the establishment of such a social order. It is inconceivable that ideas so utterly wild and chimerical, and so entirely repugnant not only to true philosophy, but to common sense, should have really become formidable, or that they should actually threaten the whole fabric of modern civilisation. But the fact is indisputable. The principles of the Red Republicans, the exploits of the Communists, the existence of the Internationale, are facts as certain as any within the range of our daily experience. They date from the Revolution of 1789, and from those principles which were assumed as the fundamental basis of that great social convulsion. They have been growing ever

since, and though often crushed and subdued for the moment, they have never been extirpated, and have risen again from every defeat, and are at present more dangerous to society than they have been at any former period since the Reign of Terror.

The watchwords of the first French Revolution were Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; and they continue to be the shibboleth of Jacobinism to this day. It is a strong instance of the pernicious effects which may flow from the adoption of one great error. Equality is not the natural condition of mankind; it is totally incompatible with the existence of society; it never has existed, and it never can exist. If it were possible to establish it, it would be destructive of all that is exalted or refined in human nature. The attempt to introduce it is a violence offered to the very nature of man. Institutions designed to foster such a principle are necessarily contrary to all that we call civilisation, and to the very existence of human society. We often have heard philosophers of this democratic school assert that 'Nature made all men equal;' and those among them who happened to have any belief in God vary the phrase by saying that 'God made all men equal.' They consider that the perversity of man has defeated the scheme of Nature or the intentions of Providence, and that the highest wisdom of an advanced civilisation is to bring back human society to its proper and original condition. Now all this is an entire and absolute fallacy; it is quite contrary to all the evidence of fact, and to all the conclusions of a sane and reasonable philo-

The natural equality of mankind the fundamental fallacy of all these theories.

sophy. It is not difficult to demonstrate that it is irreconcilably opposed to that very civilisation, that very progress, and that greatest-happiness principle for the greatest number which its disciples profess their purpose to promote. If God had intended that all men should have been equal, he would doubtless have made all men equal. Omnipotence would not have allowed itself to be defeated by the revolt of its creatures. It is easy to perceive that great inequality is not only a condition of human society, but is absolutely necessary to the development of those purposes which are indicated to us as the design of our Creator. If all men were equal there could be no development of a higher nature, no progress, even in the sense in which these very philosophers use the word. The tendency to advance, and to advance at different rates of speed, could only be arrested by arbitrary laws, which would be fatal to liberty. The free and uncontrolled action of the human race must always produce inequalities, and the attempt to curb it would necessarily be vain, and could only occasion misery and ruin. Inequality is the great law of nature. Every physical and moral quality—strength, beauty, intellectual capacity—all our mental and corporeal faculties, are distributed in the most unequal proportions. The advance of society instead of tending to diminish these inequalities proceeds in a directly contrary direction, and augments the disparity. When the first French Revolutionists proclaimed this principle of equality they raised a perpetual conflict with the essential elements of human society. Such would

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have been the inevitable result even if they had had a totally new community to work upon ; but when they sought to deal with an old, complicated, and highly civilised nation like France, nothing but confusion and anarchy could follow. The history of the last eighty years has been that of a perpetually recurring attempt to carry out these anarchical theories, constantly defeated by the movement of the society they aim to subvert ; but the struggle has been fatal to the prosperity and happiness of the nation.

The first French Revolution was commenced upon the assumption that it was evoked by, and that it replaced, a state of society utterly corrupt and vicious ; that the wide-spread abuses which it had destroyed, whether fiscal, legal, or social, were intolerable ; and that, whatever may have been the sufferings of the first period, they were a cheap price to pay for our deliverance from such a state of things. All Continental Liberals, of whatever shade or degree, unite in this view ; and in considering the Revolution of 1789 as a great stride in progress made by the civilised world. Now I totally deny all these propositions, and first of all I believe that the grossest exaggeration has prevailed respecting the vices of French society previous to the Revolution, and the magnitude of the abuses which it swept away.

Evils of
the old
system in
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exaggerated.

We may always observe that it is a part of the province of revolutionary leaders to blacken and to vilify the past state of things, while, as a general rule, their accusations are utterly untrustworthy. It is their business to raise a cry against the institutions

they aim at subverting, and the attacking party has greatly the advantage in these conflicts. The defence is generally far less active, and the disposition of the masses is to sympathise with the assailants. If the attack be successful, the defenders are swept away with the institutions which have fallen. A success quite silences the defence of those who have perished.

Works on
the Ancien
Régime, by
M. de Toc-
queville
and M.
Raudot.

There are two modern writers who have in recent times given to us descriptions of the state of society immediately previous to the Revolution. The one is M. de Tocqueville, in his 'L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution;' the other is M. Raudot, Member of the Council General of Lyons, in his 'La France avant la Révolution.' The high reputation of M. de Tocqueville as a political and philosophical writer gives to his work the weight of a great authority. M. Raudot is less generally known, but his work well merits a careful perusal. M. de Tocqueville is quite incapable of any intention of perversion of facts, either by the *suggestio falsi* or the *suppressio veri*; but all history is insensibly coloured by the opinions or prejudices of its authors. The same events will read very differently when narrated by the pen of the Jacobite, David Hume, and of the Liberal, Macaulay. M. de Tocqueville was an accomplished man of letters, but he belonged entirely to the doctrinaire school of French politicians. That party, while it censured all the violences of the Reign of Terror, yet fully adopted the principle of the Revolution of 1789 as a sharp remedy for inveterate and intoler-

able abuses, that the condition of France and the Ancien Régime was hopelessly vicious, and that the era of 1789 was a new epoch in the history of civilised man, from which we are to date the birth of a regenerated race. These are the ideas constantly presented to us by all the French historians, philosophers and political writers, for the last eighty years, not only by disciples of the perfectibility school, like Victor Hugo, but by Michelet, Mignet, Thiers, and even by Madame de Staël. M. de Tocqueville is entirely identified with the views entertained by all these writers. We must not look to him for any spirit of impartial analysis. He considers the past entirely from the point of view in which it is regarded by the public writers of the nineteenth century, which his whole work endorses.

M. Raudot approaches his subject in a far more independent spirit. He is by no means the panegyrist of the Ancien Régime. He fully admits its evils and its abuses; but he takes a much more impartial view of the condition of society which existed under it, and he points to many institutions which contained the germ of improvement, if these seeds had been cultivated. M. Raudot seeks to place himself in the position which we may imagine might have been occupied by M. de Malesherbes, M. Mounier, or M. de Lally Tollendal. He points out many checks interposed by custom, by the authority of the *Parlemens* of Paris and of the provinces, and by public opinion, which controlled the absolute exercise of the royal power. He describes man of the

provincial institutions, which contained the elements of local self-government, and which were opposed to that centralisation which was one of the consequences of the Revolution. His work will be found a valuable complement to M. de Tocqueville's, qualifying the severity of the charges preferred by the latter against the old monarchy. M. de Tocqueville, like almost all the writers of the present century, appears as a counsel against the monarchy. M. Raudot seeks to aspire, in some degree, to a judicial character. It is so difficult, when the events are so near our own time, and are so intimately connected with the present, to exercise this judicial faculty, that I think M. Raudot is almost the only French author who has made any attempt to do it.

The Commune a revival of the Reign of Terror.

We have now arrived at a new stage in this history, another act in this great drama, which the French have been playing before mankind for the last eighty years. It is pregnant with the most important lessons which history ever gave to the human race; and we should be blind indeed, wilfully blind, if we did not endeavour to read them. The first great truth which they declare is, that the awful events of the last eighteen months are not insulated and unconnected occurrences, but that they are part and parcel of the first French Revolution just as completely as was the Reign of Terror. They are the effects of precisely the same causes which have been constantly at work, agitating the whole mass of the French nation ever since. I do not mean that they are only similar causes, but that they are actually the same which

have been perpetually recurring during the whole intervening period.

The Convocation of the States-General was a strictly legal, and, as far as France could be considered as possessing dormant political rights or liberties, a constitutional proceeding. The principle of the States-General representing in three separate and distinct assemblies the Nobility, the Clergy, and the Commons, was not very dissimilar from that of our own British constitution. It certainly presented a basis upon which, without revolution, the structure of limited monarchy and constitutional government might have been raised. It was in theory, and might have proved in practice, a limited monarchy, differing no doubt in several important particulars, but similar in its general features to our own. It would have recognised the different classes in the community. The Nobility of France numbered a body consisting of about 200,000 persons. The word Nobility with us designates only the Peerage and the immediate descendants and near relations of the members of that body. The term is used in the Ancien Régime in France in a much wider sense. It included all those properly entitled to bear arms, and might be regarded as embracing the two classes who in England are generally described as Nobility and Gentry. This class would have comprised all the proprietors of land and all the higher members of the legal profession, who would have sent their representatives to constitute a sort of House of Peers, elected by the whole body of those whom we should term the Upper Classes in this country.

The States-General might have constituted a Constitutional Monarchy of a mixed character similar to our own.

The Clergy would of course have represented not only the spiritual but the material interests of their order; and the Tiers État would have formed an Assembly resembling our own House of Commons, but possibly rather more democratic in its composition. Such a form of government would certainly not have been revolutionary. It would have been based, like our own, upon the ancient laws and institutions of the country. It would have recognised all existing interests. It would have had many strong monarchical and feudal sympathies. The three bodies would have restrained and modified each other's separate action, while at the same time the publicity of free discussion and the influence of popular institutions would have introduced a spirit of genuine liberty throughout the whole.

There cannot be a doubt, it appears to me, in an impartial mind, not imbued with the fanaticism of democracy, that if France, in the Convocation of the States-General in 1789, could have adopted this legal and moderate course, that nation would have avoided great sufferings, great reverses, and terrible calamities; and that, in this present year (1872), France would be far happier, richer, more prosperous, more powerful, more progressive, and, above all, more free than she is at present. It seems manifest to an unprejudiced mind, that the eighty-three years which have elapsed, with all their struggles, aspirations, and hopes, have left her in a state far more pitiable and far more desperate than she occupied at that time. Nearly a century of struggles and convulsions has left her pro-

strate, bleeding, with all her idols broken—liberty, prosperity, national wealth, military glory, supremacy among the nations of Europe, every one of these illusions, which they in their turn cherished, are dissipated.

If there is one of all their idols which still remains partially erect, it is that phantom of Equality, which they have so madly pursued throughout the whole period. Equality is like one of those spectres in a German legend, which appears to the benighted traveller in the form of a beautiful woman, lures him on in pursuit through every danger, and when he supposes that he is on the point of embracing her, turns suddenly into a ghastly and frightful apparition. Equality was, according to the disciples of 1789, to have given them liberty: it has given to them alternations of anarchy and military despotism. Equality was to have given them prosperity, and they groan under a load of taxation which threatens them with national bankruptcy. Equality was to have given them peace, and, after eighty years of the most desolating wars the world has ever seen, they find their soil invaded, some of their fairest provinces wrested from them, and a foreign conqueror triumphant in their capital. It may be that there is more equality among Frenchmen now than there was previous to 1789. A demagogue, like Gambetta, may be a fugitive to-day and president of a republic to-morrow. The workman Assi may be toiling in a factory and earning his livelihood by daily wages one year, and the next may be the head of a secret association

Equality
denounced
as a mis-
chievous
fallacy.

threatening the very existence of society and civilisation throughout Europe. Every one may be equally exposed to all possible vicissitudes, and the position of all may be as uncertain and precarious that no idea of solid position or assured rank can possibly elevate one class, or even one man, over another. It is the equality of the Oriental nations, where a man may be born a slave and die grand vizier.

First mistakes of the Constituent Assembly.

The striking justice and truth of the remark of the Emperor Napoleon I., in his conversation with Las Casas at St. Helena, that M. Necker was responsible for the calamities of the first French Revolution, when he conceded to the Tiers État a double representation, is confirmed by all lights of subsequent experience. When the States-General met in May 1789, the future destinies of France were at their disposal. On the one hand, they had the example of England to guide them, and the proof before their eyes, that it had practically led to the highest state of prosperity, security, national greatness, and real liberty. On the other, they were invited by speculative philosophers, wild enthusiasts, and men practically unacquainted with the conduct of public affairs, to plunge at once into an unknown region, and to experimentalise upon all the problems of human society. It is often asked with some impatience, particularly by statesmen and politicians engaged in the fierce struggles of party warfare, 'What is the use of recurring to the past, and of asking a question which cannot receive a reply? What would have been the result if a different course had been adopted at any former juncture? No one can

possibly undertake to affirm, with any certainty, what might have happened under circumstances altogether different. Such speculations are idle and unprofitable, and only tend to divert our minds from the actual questions pressing for immediate solution.' Such arguments are very plausible, and, to a considerable extent, they are just. The practical side of politics must always outweigh its speculative one in moments of action. The first Napoleon was fond of quoting a line of Voltaire's in 'Mort de César':

Car j'ai toujours trouvé que dans chaque événement
Le destin des états dépend d'un moment.

Act. i. Scene 1.

Such is no doubt the case, but that moment might have been prepared by a long train of previous thought; and its action, though quick as the electric flash, may be imparted to it by a very long previous train of causes.

France had to choose, at that eventful epoch, between two systems totally different in all their essential parts from each other. It is no question of abstract speculation, but of the highest practical importance to determine, at the distance of eighty years, which of these two systems was the true one. The past is no doubt irrevocable, but human affairs may still be largely influenced by the answer which may be given to this question. Our English Constitution was built upon the ancient institutions and laws of our country, which we did not seek to subvert, but which we made the foundation upon which we raised the whole framework of our political and national existence. Everywhere the laws and usages,

English Constitution, derived in great part from the feudal system, totally opposed to the principle of social equality.

the customs and traditions, of the feudal system entered into our scheme of Government. Our liberties, not less than the distinctions of our ranks, had a feudal origin. They have been in great part formed in former times by the struggles of our Barons with the Crown. They were the legitimate fruit of that spirit of independence, and that feeling of personal honour and self-respect which the traditions of Chivalry had created. Throughout all English society, from the highest to the lowest, our manners were influenced by the ideas we associated with the word 'gentleman.' Equality of ranks and conditions was so far from being, even in theory, a part of our national polity, that it was totally repugnant, both in spirit and in practice, to all our national institutions, and to the very complexion of our national character. Upon this basis of different ranks, of different conditions, of different fortunes, we have reared the whole edifice of that Constitutional Liberty, of which we are so proud; and we believe the excellence of our system is greatly due to that very mixture of old and new, to that very preservation of feudal institutions curiously interwoven with our present state of society, which the Democratic philosophers of the French school so bitterly denounced.

As I have before observed, this social element blended together led to a political constitution creating a real mixed form of government. King, Lords, and Commons did not represent an abstract theory, but a living fact. The French had all the advantage of our example with its practical result before them,

and they also had all the materials which we had retained. France was no doubt more monarchical previous to 1789 than was England, but she possessed all the same constituents only in somewhat different proportions. The original constitution of the States-General properly worked, or the adoption of our own system of two independent Chambers, would gradually have swept away abuses, and assimilated her condition more nearly to ours. France had all the materials previous to the meeting of the States-General for entering upon a course, if not precisely identical, yet not dissimilar from our own. That system was a Monarchical form of government largely imbued with the feudal spirit, giving great power and influence to the Aristocratic element, assigning considerable weight to the Democratic spirit, cherishing a great love of ancient traditions, preserving local institutions, and restricting the direct action of Government on all the details of our domestic policy.

Although there no doubt existed many evils in the old forms of French Government, yet there was also much good ; and, as in our own case, evils would gradually have yielded before a wise and cautious curative policy. It cannot be too strongly or too often insisted upon that the course of the French Revolution was diametrically the reverse of this. There is a vague impression abroad, that England and France have both been treading in the same path, only at different rates of progress ; that the principles are the same, although the manner of

applying them may be different. This I wholly deny. France might, in May 1789, have adopted the same principles which England had embraced. She did adopt the very opposite ones. She resolved upon the rash experiment of destroying, as far as was possible, the whole framework of her existing civilisation, of making war upon the past, of sweeping away ranks, privileges, property, religion, everything which had previously existed, and reconstructing the whole edifice of society according to certain wild theories engendered in the brains of a few enthusiasts. The lights of experience were wholly rejected, and the world was to be fashioned anew, according to the visions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and other theorists of the perfectibility school. They had persuaded themselves that all the evils which afflict humanity had had their source in the errors and blunders of statesmen and legislators, and that, by sweeping every vestige of these away, they might reconstruct human institutions upon a pure model. The first step in this process was to establish a complete Democracy, and this they proceeded immediately to effect. The double representation of the Tiers État gave them a great preponderance, and the fusion of the Three Estates into one Assembly completed the work. From the moment that this fusion was accomplished, the Revolution was in fact consummated; France was transformed, as by an enchanter's wand, from an old and absolute Monarchy into a new and untried Republic. All real political power became vested in the Assembly. It is true

France
virtually
a Demo-
cratic Re-
public
from the
date of the
fusion of
the Three
Estates
into one
Assembly.

that the title of King did not immediately disappear, but the reality of power had wholly departed. The succeeding events of that disastrous period were but the steps towards an inevitable conclusion. The 5th and 6th October 1789, when the King and Queen were forced into Paris, were compelled to leave Versailles, and to fix their residence in the Tuileries, their capture at Varennes in their attempt to escape, and the final catastrophe of the 10th August 1792, were but different acts in the same drama. The Monarchy of France fell, and was replaced by a pure Democratic Republic, on the day when the Three Estates were merged into one Assembly.

There is another popular impression which is equally erroneous, and which is very general in France. It is that all the crimes and atrocities which disfigured the first French Revolution are confined to the Reign of Terror, which existed at its height from the fall of the Girondists to the death of Robespierre. This darkest page in the history of European civilisation is made responsible for all the follies, mistakes, and crimes which sully the earlier periods. It has certainly sufficient of its own to answer for, without being made to bear the burthen of the sins of its predecessors. The Reign of Terror is not responsible for the grievous faults of the previous years from 1789, although they may fairly be charged with being the causes of the culminating atrocities of the reign of Robespierre.

The two principles upon which the French Revolution was based, seem to have been the absolute

Popular French writers ignore all the previous errors of the French Revolution, and confine them to the Reign of Terror.

The two chief principles of the first

French
Revolution
are the
natural
equality of
man and
the sove-
reignty of
the people.

Inequality
is the
natural
state of
man, more
especially
as civilisa-
tion ad-
vances.

natural equality of man and the dogma, that the sovereignty of the people is the only legitimate source of power. From the first of these principles followed, logically, the entire destruction of the whole existing social system in France. The same results would have followed in any civilised society whatever, for perfect equality was quite incompatible with any form of civilisation. Great disparity in the conditions of life is coeval with the first birth of human society; and, so far it is a part of the very nature of man, as he issues from the hands of his Creator; and the whole moral government of the world, and the entire intellectual development and progress of the human race, is a necessary consequence of this inequality. So far from the advance of civilisation tending to diminish, it invariably augments, these inequalities. The older a nation is, the more dense its population, and the more varied the features of its organisation, the greater and wider will be the inequalities between the different ranks in the community which composes it. It is not to be inferred, that this inequality of conditions leads to a proportionate inequality in the happiness of individuals. There is a vast variety and amount of compensations under every circumstance of human life; and we must always recollect that, in all old and thickly populated States, this inequality follows from the necessary and inevitable divisions and subdivisions of labour and employments. A crowded state of society can only exist, and, still more, can only exist in a highly civilised form, where there is this

inequality pervading the whole society. Among younger nations and communities, in an earlier stage of development, these inequalities become less marked. A young American, in one of the Western States, may try his hand at a number of different trades ; he may begin as a blacksmith, change and become a baker, set up a liquor shop, go into commerce, and die a millionaire or President of the Republic. He might not be guided merely by a fickle disposition in these changes ; but supposing him gifted with sagacity, energy, and intelligence, he might adroitly seize the different openings which the varying demands of a new and ever-shifting state of society might naturally offer ; while in a country like England such a change of occupations would speedily end in ruin. Every man's line in life is marked out for him by the fact, that every other line is filled up by others, and that if he leaves an occupation or profession which he has pursued for some time, his place is immediately occupied by another, while his own entrance into a new course of life is barred by the prior occupation of others.

These diversities in pursuits, occupations, and means of livelihood, spring naturally from the three great divisions into which all civilised communities necessarily resolve themselves. It is quite obvious that manual labour is the great cause of all production whatever ; whether it be agriculture, manufactures, or trades, all are necessarily the work of man's hands, directed indeed by mind and intelligence, and set in motion by capital ; but the amount of mind

Civilised society is naturally divided into three classes.

and intelligence required to plan and direct bears no sort of proportion to the amount of labour required to execute the work which is planned ; and from this it necessarily results, that the vast majority of the population of any country must be engaged in occupations requiring manual labour. There is evidently the work to be done ; we cannot have food or clothing, or houses to live in, or furniture to fill them, or ships to bring us foreign productions, or, in short, any object of common utility whatever, if we except those few productions which are used in their purely simple and natural state, without human labour. There is before our eyes in this world an immense amount of work which must necessarily be performed, and which, if not performed, will lead to a retrograde motion in civilisation. The great mass of mankind must of necessity be manual labourers, and must earn their subsistence by the work of their hands. Capitalists, and those who employ and direct this labour, must form a distinct class, and a much smaller one than that of the workers ; and those who possess property already acquired, and who are enabled to live upon its proceeds with more or less of affluence and of luxury, must constitute a third class, elevated above the other two. These are the three natural divisions of society, into which all civilised communities must resolve themselves, and they themselves constitute a wide difference in the conditions of men. The practical difference between the condition of a working man on a farm, or on a railroad, or in a manufactory or a mine, and any

one possessed of an independent income, however moderate, is far greater than that which separates the man of moderate independent income from a millionaire or a great noble. Our levellers and democrats in later times have become aware of this distinction, and seek to efface it by arbitrary schemes for the abolition of property, or, rather, for its assumption by the State, upon whom is to devolve the duty of maintaining all the individuals of the community in a state of perfect equality. These institutions, if they were possible, would be the most oppressive and tyrannical in practice that can be conceived. It must be apparent to common sense, that they are utterly impracticable, and that these three great divisions must remain under any form of human society.

The effect of this attempt to force equality upon an ancient nation, under these circumstances, would be necessarily vain; it would lead to infinite confusion and misery. The belief, if disseminated among the labouring and lower classes of the community—that they were entitled to this perfect equality, and that every deviation from it was a usurpation, and a wrong inflicted upon them—would poison all the natural affections of mankind. A bitter hostility would spring up between classes mutually dependent upon each other, and whose prosperity and happiness are indissolubly connected; and if this principle is mischievous in all communities, because utterly false in itself and incompatible with human nature, it is doubly and trebly so in an ancient, monarchical, and

aristocratic nation such as France was. There, at every step in its progress of destruction, it must trample upon prescriptive rights, legal possessions, property, and all the ties which bind together her social relations; and what does it offer by which to replace them?—Utopian schemes, and chimerical theories, which never have been, and never will be, realised, and which none of those speculative philosophers ever has, or ever can, bring to the test of experience.

The dogma
of the sove-
reignty of
the people.

The next dogma which led the understanding or imaginations of men astray at that period, was the doctrine that the sovereignty of the people was the only source of legitimate power. I apprehend that what the disciples of this particular faith might have meant was, that the sovereign will of the people ought to have been, in their opinion, the source of political power, not that it was, or that it ever had actually been so. Where, in the whole history of the world, did they ever find any society actually founded upon that principle? The oldest civilisation upon the globe is that of the Asiatic nations, and to this day their population greatly exceeds that of the rest of the world; but where among any of them, from the earliest times, was such a principle ever found at the root of society? Despotism seems to have been cotemporary with their very birth, and continues to this day. I suppose that it will not be looked for among the earlier nations of the American continent, or that it was discovered in Mexico or Peru by Cortes or Pizarro. It certainly never has offered itself to the researches of the traveller in the

interior of Africa, or among the savage tribes scattered over other portions of the globe.

I have remarked in a former work, that all science is founded either upon the exact sciences, upon the evidence of fact derived from observations and analysis, or from the results of experimental philosophy, testing by experience the truth of theories, and proving them by actual experiment. Political science is no exception to this rule. It must be pursued by the same methods. Now where do we find that the sovereign will of the people has in former times ever established a Government, or ruled a nation? It is not difficult to trace the first commencement of government in almost all rude nations. Instead of originating in the will of the people, it almost always begins with some military leader. Force cannot be created unless it is in some shape organised and disciplined. It cannot be organised and disciplined, except by the predominance of one will over other wills in any military body: one must command, and others obey. This relation does not spring up from the voluntary act of the mass recognising the necessity of discipline, and willingly submitting themselves to it. It takes its rise from the natural inequality of man, and the superiority in the qualities essential to command, which one individual possesses over another. One man is braver, more energetic, more self-possessed in the hour of danger, gifted with a stronger will, and of greater power of gaining an ascendancy over his fellows, either by force or affection. Such an

individual naturally works to the surface. If there are wars with other tribes, he acquires by degrees an absolute authority over his soldiers. He punishes first the weak or cowardly, next the careless or mutinous—mankind always reverence successful force—he becomes gradually a leader of men, a conqueror, a founder of an empire ; or, if this is not the work of one individual, it is the work of a succession treading in each other's footsteps. This is the natural progress of society, particularly in all its early stages. Where do we find in it room for the principle, that the sovereignty of the people is the legitimate source of all authority ? What is meant by a natural right of this kind ? or how can we show that this is the source of all legitimate power, when it seems clear that power never was originally derived from it ? And it is not difficult to show, that even in the rare cases in which some faint shadow of such a power has existed, it never has been either permanent, or during its transient duration at all favourable, either to individual liberty, social happiness, or national greatness.

The two main principles, therefore, upon which the French Revolution appears to have been founded were utterly false ; and it is by no means surprising that the attempt to put them into practice led almost immediately to complete anarchy. No previous Revolution that had ever taken place was so complete in its disastrous results, for none ever aimed at so entire a subversion of the past. There was a sort of pedantry in this spirit of change which was almost

ridiculous in its minuteness. The days of the week, the months of the year, must be altered, and the names of the streets must be re-christened.

A still more important revolution was to be effected in the religious ideas of the nation. The desire which is generally entertained by the Liberals of the present day, to pass entirely over all the errors and crimes of that period, has induced them to turn aside from the recollections of this chapter in the Revolutionary annals. It is scarcely remembered now that, for at least eight years, the Christian religion was formally abolished in France. I do not suppose that Christians were forbidden to worship in the privacy of their own houses, but all public celebration of Divine worship of every kind and of every sect ceased. There were no organised ministers of religion. The whole property of the Church was confiscated. There was no payment whatever to the clergy of any denomination. The churches were appropriated to secular uses. The priesthood were generally driven into exile. I suppose that there is no parallel case, since the establishment of Christianity, in which all the practices of religion had been so thoroughly and effectually abolished. It is very remarkable also to notice, that so completely had religious feeling and principle been eradicated from the minds of the people, that this momentous change led to no struggle, was followed by no popular manifestations whatever. If any attempt of a similar kind were made in England, or Scotland, or Ireland, at the present time, what a reaction it would occasion.

Revolution
directed
against
religion.

Would Presbyterians, or Wesleyans, or Independents, or Baptists, or Roman Catholics, quietly subside into nothing? Would their fervid zeal not immediately break out into the most violent demonstrations against such an assault upon their most cherished convictions. But not a symptom of the existence of such feelings was ever manifested throughout the whole of those mighty changes. The French Revolution, throughout its whole course from 1789 to its overthrow by Napoleon in 1800, exhibited the most perfect indifference to all religious sentiment, and the bitterest hostility to all religious establishments.

I must repeat again that no view can be more mistaken than that of representing the French Revolution, in its commencement, as a pure, noble, and wise movement, arising out of the growing enlightenment of society, and only subsequently disfigured by the temporary excesses of a period of popular delirium. From its very birth and during its whole course the first French Revolution was pregnant with evil, was utterly false in principle, and was disfigured by violence and crime. It was quite necessary and inevitable that, as it proceeded, all its darker features should assume an intenser shade; but they existed from the beginning, and its later horrors were but the natural offspring of its original errors and vices.*

* A short recapitulation of the dates of some of the principal events of the French Revolution will confirm this. It will prove, unmistakably, that however the crimes and madness of the Reign of Terror may be referred to by Frenchmen as embodying

It is the more necessary to assert these positions, since even to the present day each of the earlier phases of the Revolution has its champions, who regard its later crimes, calamities, and ultimate failure, as the result of a departure from that particular stage

all the guilt and follies of the French Revolution, yet that its violence and its anarchy had its birth long previous to that period, and commenced from the very first assembling of the States-General. The establishment of a purely democratic form of government by the union of the Three Estates was their first act. Monarchy existed only in name from that period. The confiscation of the property of the Church and of the estates of emigrants, and the abolition of all titles—all these were the work of the Constituent Assembly. All the legislative acts which consummated the first French Revolution were enacted during its reign; and in reading the annals of that period we are led by so insensible a gradation from violence to violence, and from crime to crime, that it is almost impossible to draw a line which would distinctly trace the commencement of revolutionary anarchy. The execution of the inoffensive and well-intentioned Louis XVI. preceded the date assigned as the commencement of the Reign of Terror by nearly six months. The Girondists, whom some classes of French Republicans contrast with 'the Mountain' as a high and pure class of Republicans, were equally participators with the Jacobins in the murder of that blameless monarch, and fell themselves a few months after by the hands of their more savage, but scarcely less criminal, contemporaries.

1789, June 17. Three Orders united into one body and declared to be the National Assembly.

„ „ 20. The oath to provide a new Constitution.

„ July 14. The taking of the Bastille.

„ Aug. 4. Abolition of privileged orders.

„ Oct. 6. The King and Queen compelled to enter Paris.

„ Nov. 2. Church property taken for the service of the State.

„ Dec. 22. The domains of the Crown and estates of emigrants taken for the public use.

1790, June 19. Titles, armorial bearings, and seigniorial distinctions abolished.

„ July 12. The Church organised as a civil institution.

at which they consider the Revolution ought to have terminated. The admirers of what they termed the brilliant and unfortunate Gironde assign as this point the overthrow of those eloquent enthusiasts. Others go back to the formal abolition of the monarchy ; others to the confiscation of the property of emigrants and of the Church ; but the truth is, that all these were part and parcel of the same series of events, and flowed logically from those false principles upon which the first Revolution proceeded from its very commencement.

1791, May 31. Introduction of the guillotine.

„ June 25. Flight of the King and Royal family stopped at Varennes, and they are brought back to Paris.

„ Sept. 30. Last sitting of the National or Constituent Assembly.

„ Oct. 1. The new Constitution comes into operation.

1792, Aug. 10. Sack of the Tuileries, and King and Queen imprisoned in the Temple.

„ Sept. 21. Opening of the National Convention.

„ „ 22. The King deposed, and France declared a Republic.

1793, Jan. 21. Execution of the King.

„ June 2. The Girondists finally overpowered by the Jacobins, and the Reign of Terror commences.

„ Oct. 16. Mock trial and execution of Marie Antoinette.

„ Nov. 10. The Convention decrees the worship of the Goddess of Reason.

„ „ 24. Introduces the new Calendar.

1794, July 28. Robespierre and seventy-one of his party beheaded.

„ Aug. 24. End of the Reign of Terror.

1795, Oct. 4. Rising of some of the sections in Paris put down by Bonaparte and his artillery.

1796 and 1797. Bonaparte's great Italian victories of Montenotte, Lodi, Arcola, Mantua, &c.

1798. His Egyptian Expedition.

1799. Return to Paris. Coup d'état of the 18 Brumaire.

They began by denouncing all existing forms of society as based upon error, and all existing creeds as fallacies and impostures. They succeeded more completely than any Revolutionists had ever done in uprooting every principle, every institution, every belief, every tradition—political, moral, or religious—which had ever been received by nations, or exercised influence over mankind; and we have now to mark how they prospered in their attempts at reconstruction, or what was the fate of those systems which they tried to inaugurate. This is the more necessary at the present time, because society and civilisation are called upon to combat them anew. It was believed until lately that all the doctrines, all the errors and crimes of the first French Revolution had passed away, that it had been a transient ebullition of national insanity, condemned by the judgment of all parties, and banished for ever from every class of all civilised communities.

How mistaken was this confidence, the history of France since the Revolution of 1848 and the overthrow of Louis Philippe abundantly demonstrate. That new social convulsion at once revealed to the world that Jacobinism in all its insane fanaticism, still circulates in the veins of those classes who had once felt its delirious excitement. Wild enthusiasts clinging to all the pernicious sophisms of that deadly epoch were ever ready to spring to the surface when the relaxation of the force of government gave them the least opportunity. Paris was still the crater from which the lava of anarchy was ever ready to

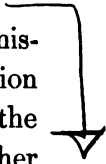
pour, and the existence of the materials for a renewal of the Reign of Terror — nay, the accumulated strength which has been slowly gathering—has become a recognised fact. To this portion of my subject I shall subsequently revert, but at present I return to the consideration of those earlier acts of this great and terrible drama.

The first French Revolution adopted as its starting point the entire reconstruction of society.

The first French Revolution adopted as its starting point the entire reconstruction of human society upon a new basis from its very foundations. That was in itself an attempt of gigantic temerity, but in prosecuting it they proceeded on a course quite opposed to all the principles of correct analysis. Political science resembles all other sciences in the means required to study its principles. All sciences must be investigated by one of three methods. The conclusions obtained from the exact sciences are the first and the surest where they are capable of being applied. The next is the evidence of fact, and the results of experience derived from a long and careful comparison of the results of causes and effects. This second method is the most available for a political study. Human nature must be taken as the subject-matter, and the political philosopher must consider it by the lights of that experience which history can supply. The political philosopher must analyse existing society, just as the anatomist dissects the corporeal body, or as a chemist experimentalises with the different essences in his laboratory. Experimental science, which is the third method of inquiry, must be very cautiously dealt with, and must be

constantly measured by the effects of previous trials. Politics are among the most deceiving and baffling of all sciences, and nothing is more impracticable than to lay down abstract principles to which they must conform.

Now the great source of all the errors and mistakes of the first French Revolution was the adoption of this very course. They utterly discarded all the lessons of experience. They never asked whether any system had succeeded, or where or how it had succeeded. They considered that everything had been constructed on a wrong basis, and that nothing could be more easy than to destroy the whole existing frame of society, and to build it up again upon sounder and better principles. They considered that the true and just principles upon which all government ought to rest, were the sovereignty of the people and the perfect equality of man, and they proposed to rear a structure ascribed with the words, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which was to embody all these conceptions. They never asked whether such systems had ever been tried, or what had been the results. They never tested them by any application to human society as it existed; but they adopted them without examination as incontrovertible, and then proceeded in an endeavour to realise them. Now the result was, as every one knows, utter failure, universal confusion, appalling national misery, and a return to absolute monarchy under a new name. If they had condescended to look into the past, and to read the annals of the



human race, such as history has transmitted to us, they would have found that the results have been uniformly the same, and that in their scheme of a pure Democratic Republic they were attempting nothing new, but only repeating experiments which had always ended in ruin and failure.

Review
of past
attempts
to found
Demo-
cracies.

The past history of the world furnishes several examples of attempts to construct society upon principles practically identical with those embraced by the first French Revolutionists, and the results have been uniformly reproduced with a fidelity and exactness which give them all the authority of a necessary and inevitable relation of cause and effect. The French Revolution was an attempt to recast an old society upon a principle of absolute equality, and the sovereignty of the whole body of the people. It was to introduce perfect individual liberty, general prosperity, and universal love. Perhaps the experiment had never been tried before so completely, but it has very frequently been made upon a partial scale, and it has always produced universal confusion, anarchy, and misery, and has ended in a recurrence to absolute power wielded by some military conqueror.

First
example :
the Greek
Republics.

The first example which suggests itself to every student of history, is that of the ancient Republics of Greece. Here the experiment was tried under very peculiar and remarkable conditions, which can never recur again. From the earliest dawn of history, from those periods of the world's childhood, from which its faintest gleam has penetrated to us,

despotic rule seems to have been the universal principle of government. Even among the wandering nomad tribes of Arabia and Central Asia, a rude but arbitrary authority seems to have governed the various tribes. Whether we turn to the Assyrian, the Persian, or the Egyptian dynasties the same lesson is repeated. If we look at China, and endeavour to decipher its records through the mists of an antiquity which seems fabulous, the result is similar. Any resemblance to a principle of political liberty, or even to a natural and instinctive love of it, can nowhere be traced. So far from the investigations and researches of any political philosopher who followed the recognised methods of inquiry, leading him to the conclusion that the sovereignty of the people was an innate conviction, and the natural basis upon which man had sought to rear the edifice of laws and government, his researches would have led him to a directly opposite conclusion. He would have come to the conviction that man was a being whom the necessities of his nature led to create for himself some ruler by whose will he was governed, and whose commands he obeyed. His instincts appeared in the earlier stages of the world constantly to have impelled him to the adoption of such a course, just as certainly as bees are led to choose a queen, or migratory birds follow some leader in their aerial flights to other climes. The authority to frame just laws, and the power to control, within recognised limits, the ruling power in a state, are not natural rights coeval with the very

existence of human society, but refinements requiring the highest exercise of human reason, and only arrived at in the most advanced stages of civilisation.

The birth of the Greek Republics is a phenomenon in the world's history. Their genius, their intellectual superiority to all former races of men are a problem yet unsolved. With them, as far as we know, political freedom and the love of national liberty first made their appearance in the world. Democracy as a principle of government was then first attempted. It was tried under conditions in some respects very favourable. The Greek Republics were very small states, scarcely equalling in size our average English counties, and their population was not over dense. The duties of government with them must have more nearly resembled the administration in the concerns of a county by its magistrates, or of a city by its municipality, than the diversified objects of a great empire; and a democratic form of government is certainly much better suited to small than to large states. Yet these first Republics soon displayed, combined with the excellences, all the vices and evils inherent in that form of government. They were brilliant, they were intellectual, they were brave and patriotic, but they were violent, fickle, unstable, tyrannical, and unjust. Their career was a very brief one, singularly so when compared with the mark which they have left behind them in the world's history. We may assume it to have been comprised between the battle of Marathon, 490 B.C., and the battle of Chæronea, 338 B.C.,

a period of about a century and a half. Their fall was that usual to democracies. Distracted by intestine divisions, weakened by mutual rivalry, jealous of all superiority, and torn by factions, they fell beneath the single concentrated policy and military genius of Philip of Macedon. Their fate taught this first lesson to the world, which has been so often repeated since—that democracy never lasts, and it always calls into existence military power, and is subdued by the ascendancy of that very power which is created by it.

The Romans were a very different people, and had a principle of permanence in which the Greeks were deficient. They were the only ancient nation whose political constitution bore any resemblance to that of the English. It was a mixed form of government, in which the aristocratic and democratic elements were blended. In all the earlier periods of Roman history, when that mighty nation was gradually working its way to the empire of the world, the aristocratic element preponderated. Democracy fought against it with unwearied perseverance, always gaining a little upon it—for democracy is naturally the most encroaching of all powers, never resting satisfied until it has absorbed every other—and always falling a victim to its own inherent vices, and subdued by some military ascendancy, generally one that it has itself called into existence. Thus, so long as the aristocratic and democratic elements bore anything like an equal relation to each other, the Republic continued to advance and to prosper; but

The
Roman
Republic.

almost immediately after the plebeians had succeeded in triumphing over the aristocracy the Empire fell under the absolute rule of the Cæsars, under whose government, in the stately language of Gibbon—

‘The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence; the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government.’

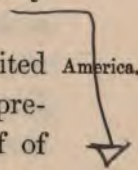
‘The fine theory of a Republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy.’

Our own
Civil War.

A third and notable example of the tendency of democracy calling into existence military power, under which it is the first victim, is furnished by our own history of the Great Rebellion. It is a favourite theme with some of our modern Liberals to exalt the character of Cromwell as a champion of liberty, but surely no praise could be less deserved. Cromwell had all the distinguished qualities usually found in great conquerors. As a statesman he was sagacious, far-seeing, thoroughly unscrupulous, energetic, grasping, and ambitious; as a general he held the first rank among the military leaders of his time. The art of war has received so many changes and modifications since the period of his campaigns that it is difficult accurately to estimate their strategic merit; but a general who never led his troops except to victory, and who triumphed over all whom he encountered, must have had a high order of military genius. But to speak of Oliver Cromwell as a champion of liberty is about as true as to invest Attila with a similar character.

His suppression of the Long Parliament was almost the exact resemblance of the great military revolution of Napoleon on the 18 Brumaire. So true is the likeness, that if the names of the actors in the one scene were substituted for those in the other, the narrative might serve to describe either event. In either case there is a similarity in this result—that the admirers of revolution refuse to recognise the fact that these great leaders were equally the victors over the revolutions which had called them into existence. Cromwell was more despotic than the Tudors. He trampled upon the authority of that Parliament which it had been the great object to invest with supreme power; and the latter years of his life were spent in intrigues to raise himself to the throne, an object which, if he had been spared for a few years, he would probably have attained.

The example of America will constantly be cited by Liberal authorities in contradiction to those precedents drawn from the Old World, and in proof of the practicability of carrying on the affairs of a great nation upon a purely democratic basis. It is quite natural that they should take up this position, and it is certainly the strongest which history gives them. There are, however, many circumstances peculiar to America which may serve to explain the cause of the success, as far as they have been tried, of those democratic institutions. The Declaration of Independence was not the establishment of an entirely new government: it was merely the severance of a



tie which bound to the parent state a number of communities, which, as far as all local government was concerned, were already, and indeed had been almost from their existence, practically independent. The Americans generally prefer styling themselves our brothers, and their jealousy of conceding even the least shade of superiority makes them reject the metaphor of parent and child; but it nevertheless describes far more accurately than this fraternal designation the real nature of the connection between the two states. The thirteen United States were necessarily semi-independent communities almost from their origin; and they had imported from the parent state all the machinery of local self-government which then, as now, continued to be interwoven with our English national existence. They also taught the English habits of freedom, combined with those of submission to lawful authority, which were a part of the English character. In the New England States this was, perhaps, embodied in the most democratic form which the England of the seventeenth century could furnish; but it was in the main the transfer to a new world of all the machinery of English national life. The whole mass of our English law—so wise, so free, guarding so jealously the liberty of the subject, as well as the rights of property—was transferred to American soil, where it continues, I believe, to be the basis of American jurisprudence. Trial by jury, the Habeas Corpus Act, all the securities for liberty, and all the safe-

guards against anarchy, which exist with us, had been naturalised in America for a century and a half previous to her separation from the mother country. No new laws were necessary, no violent internal convulsions were required, to interrupt the ordinary march of affairs, or to substitute untried powers for those which had existed. Probably a stranger would have remarked little difference in the America under the Presidency of Washington, from the appearance it exhibited while still acknowledging the sovereignty of the British Crown. There was no violent change of system, no sudden uprooting of the laws or the social condition of the community. There was no war of class against class, no sudden change in the different ranks of society. The America of 1790 differed little from that of 1770 in all its domestic and internal relations. The English governors of the thirteen United Provinces had given place to governors elected in these States. The name of Washington, as President, replaced that of the King of Great Britain; but the internal change was inconsiderable, not much more than it would be now if the almost nominal sovereignty of the British Government became extinct in Canada or the Australian Colonies. The State governments retain, for the most part, all the prerogatives which they previously enjoyed; and the federal character, which now appears to be vanishing, continued to be the prominent characteristic in the earlier days of the new Republic.

The peaceful working of American institutions greatly owing to the rarity of the population.

The main difficulty which occurs in all the older States of Europe had no existence in America. There was no pressure of population upon the means of subsistence. Even at the present time some thirty-eight millions of souls are scattered over an area greatly exceeding that of Europe. If we take France alone, its population is about equal to that of the whole North American Republic, and the German States bear about the same proportion.

Every one who has studied politics or political economy, since the first publication of Mr. Malthus's work, must be aware how important a bearing its principles have upon all the questions concerned in the social relations of man. All laws, all institutions, all the habits of ordinary life, all morality, whether public or private, the whole welfare of nations, are involved in the conclusions at which Mr. Malthus arrived, and the results which flow from his premises. The whole commercial and economical policy of states must be governed in accordance with those laws which regulate the increase of population and of the necessities of life. The main foundation of Mr. Malthus's whole system is, that the natural tendency of population is to increase in a far more rapid ratio than the means of subsistence and the first necessities of life, and, as it is quite evident that population cannot actually exceed the measure of food and first necessities required for the support of life, that the increase of the human race must be governed by the supply of food and necessities; just as if two horses of very different speed were

harnessed to the same vehicle, their rate of progress could not exceed the best pace of the slowest : the faster horse would be constantly restrained from putting out his full speed by the slowness of his yoke-fellow. Hence a struggle, more or less active, would be constantly going on ; and such is actually the case in all communities of men. The strongest instincts of human nature are constantly leading them to outrun the limits of subsistence ; the lower and poorer classes must always be treading upon the margin of this limit, and the struggle in competition for these first necessities of life would be the keenest among them ; and the more densely crowded is the state, and the scantier, either from natural infertility of soil or from any other cause, is the supply of food, the fiercer will be that competition, and the greater the inequalities in the different ranks of society.

In China, one of the oldest and most thickly peopled countries on the face of the globe, it is said that, among the 350,000,000 of its inhabitants, the lowest classes are driven to feed on vermin, such as rats and mice ; and we see in Ireland, previous to the famine, that the cottier population, subsisting only on that cheapest of roots, the potato, multiplied beyond all proportion to the inhabitants of any other portion of the British Empire.

Now, in America the pressure of population is less, and the necessities of life more abundant than in almost any other country in the world. This is a natural result of the settlement of a highly civilised

race in new and eminently fertile regions of boundless extent. All the laws affecting property in the older States of the world are enacted in order to guard it against the attacks of the poor and destitute ; but in new and half-peopled countries, like America, property, and especially property in land, is easily acquired, and the rate of increase between food and population approaches far more nearly to a uniformity than in the old crowded countries of the world.

↓ We see, therefore, that the Americans had a great facility afforded them, and a great difficulty and danger removed from their democratic institutions, resulting from the unlimited supply of unappropriated land, and the fertility which in many districts afforded so large a return for the least labour. We must also remember that America, particularly as it existed eighty or a hundred years ago, was necessarily a country in which the ranks approached more nearly to equality than in the ancient nations. Hereditary ranks or arbitrary distinctions could have little or no existence in so young a community. Fortunes must be comparatively equal where the time necessary for accumulation had not yet been afforded. The generations who from father to son had been raised above the level of the working classes, could have no existence when the origin of society itself was so recent.

These are considerations which are very generally passed over by Radical politicians, when they contrast the social condition of the mass of the people

in America with that in England or in other parts of Europe. But all these conditions are most important, and rendered the experiment of Democracy in America tried under circumstances more favourable than perhaps ever existed before.

There is another question which suggests itself to the philosophical politician, which is, whether the permanence of a democratic form of government, or its consistency with the requirements of a highly advanced state of civilisation, can yet be considered as fully tested in America. The Republic is only about eighty years old, dating from its final settlement after the close of the War of Independence. Eighty years, only the term of one long life, are a very brief space in the history of a nation. We must remember, also, that all these conditions as having been so favourable to the maintenance of the democratic institutions, although they still exist to a great degree, are yet rapidly changing, and not in a direction so fully in accordance with the spirit of Democracy.

Wealth is increasing, and very large fortunes are now accumulated in New York and the other principal cities of the Union. Wealth has always a tendency to become hereditary. The instincts of parental affection are adverse to the thought of leaving our children in a worse position than we have ourselves attained. Wealth begets wealth, and thus a class hereditarily rich is formed in New York, Pennsylvania, and the other great and flourishing communities in the United States. An hereditary wealthy

Increase
of wealth.

order is the greatest of all inequalities, and the foundation of all others which constitute the real nobility of every State. A class in which both sexes have for some generations enjoyed the luxuries, the refinements, and the cultivated tastes which naturally flow from the hereditary possession of affluence, becomes virtually a nobility, although the conventional title and personal marks of distinction may be absent. Here is one great and growing cause why a purely democratic state of society may not be in unison with the feelings or sentiments of the most elevated ranks of its citizens. Some symptoms of this are apparent in the eagerness with which, of late years, the richer American citizens seek the enjoyments afforded by the older European States. They swarm in Paris and in the Italian cities, and are everywhere conspicuous from the ardour with which they seek to acquire the most precious works of ancient and modern art.

Among the causes which facilitated the practical working of Democracy, I have dwelt upon the circumstance that the United States, as originally constituted, consisted of thirteen almost independent communities, that each individual State was governed within itself, and that the federal tie of connection was comparatively slight. It seems that the progress of events has tended to strengthen the federal power, and to diminish the influence of the authority of the States. The terrible Civil War, out of which America has so recently issued, has no doubt confirmed the ascendancy of the Northern States, but it has reduced

one-third of the Union to the condition of a conquered people. The emancipated negroes are in great difficulty and embarrassment, and it must be very long before this once flourishing and politically important branch of the Great Republic can be amalgamated on any cordial terms with the victors. The Civil War, too, in which the highest military qualities were displayed by both the combatants, will leave the seeds of a love of military glory, which even before that time was a strong feature in the American character; and we must remember that what I have considered as the main cause of the success of the great democratic experiment in America—viz. the rarity and scattered character of its population—is undergoing great alterations.

The United States, considered as a whole, are no doubt scantily peopled, and centuries may elapse before they can count anything like the number per acre which are to be found in the British Empire, Belgium, or in France, Germany or Italy; but there are already considerable local aggregations, which in their principal cities produce a considerable effect. New York seems to be becoming occasionally turbulent, and street fighting not unknown there.

There is a very interesting work, lately published by Mr. Jennings, who was resident in New York during the Civil War. It is entitled 'Republican Government in the United States,' and it points out the many changes, we may almost say revolutions, which have occurred during that period. I believe that America will occupy, and indeed has

Growth of
popula-
tion
adverse to
the main-
tenance of
Demo-
cracy.

already assumed, a high rank among the first nations in the world. I believe that a yet loftier career is before her, and considering how fast she is accumulating all the elements of political power—wealth, population, military glory—and how wise, energetic, and far-seeing her policy is, I cannot set bounds to her ultimate greatness. But I do not feel the least assurance in the stability of her institutions or present form of government. There seems to me to be every disturbing cause at work most calculated to undermine them.

The preceding table of dates proves subversion of social order to be the act of the Constituent Assembly, and not of the Reign of Terror.

My object in extracting the dates contained in the preceding table is certainly not to form a summary or condensed abridgment of the history of that important epoch—the first French Revolution. It is to point out by the irrefragable proof which these dates furnish that all the vast changes wrought in the national and social existence of France were not the acts of the Reign of Terror, but of those previous stages in that great moral convulsion which led to it. The Reign of Terror seemed to be a period of absolute insanity, when everybody was fully occupied in cutting off everybody else's head. First came Louis XVI. and the Royalists; then followed all the Girondists; the victors in the civil strife—'the Mountain'—next quarrelled among themselves, and Robespierre cut off Danton's head, declaring that the Revolution would not be complete until 200,000 more heads had fallen on the scaffold. Fortunately, these 200,000 heads, or the greater part of them, were saved by his own head being taken off pre-

viously, with those of seventy or eighty of the chiefs of his party.

Now, in this universal decapitation men had really not time to carry out great legislative changes, and I think it will be found that all those laws which altered so completely the whole nature of the French national and social existence were the work of the Constituent Assembly. It was the Constituent Assembly which, in fact, although not in name, abolished the Monarchy in France. Investing the whole power of the State in one Assembly virtually reduced the Monarchy to a shadow, and this shadow was blown away by the first popular breeze. It was the Constituent Assembly which abolished all titles and designations. It was the Constituent Assembly which confiscated the property of all emigrants, and destroyed the territorial aristocracy. It was the Constituent Assembly which seized the property of the Church, and abolished all public religious rites. Never since the birth of Civilisation had so entire and thorough an uprooting of all the institutions of a state been effected as was accomplished by that Constituent Assembly. Its appellation was a misnomer, for while it destroyed everything, it constituted scarcely anything. All that it attempted to raise fell again, but almost all that it overthrew remained prostrate.

It is of the greatest possible importance accurately to determine the date of all these great social convulsions, because among all Continental writers a false halo is thrown over the earlier deeds of the

Revolution, and all that is anarchical and destructive cast upon the excesses of the Jacobins. To this day, all the revolutions which have distracted the Continent of Europe have been copies more or less exact of that first original. Continental Liberalism, whether we look to Greece, to Italy, to Spain, to Germany, or to France, has borrowed all its ideas from 1789. In some cases they have been partially modified, and their application controlled, but the source is always to be found there. Never has any one Continental state taken England as its model, or tried to follow the example of 1688 instead of that of 1789. Liberalism is another word for Democracy, and the conventional terms 'Liberal,' 'Moderate Liberal,' 'Advanced Liberal' are but different appellations for the various shades of Democracy from the doctrinaire to the Red Republican.

It is worth remarking, too, that the excesses of the Reign of Terror are more transient in their effects than the legislative Revolution which preceded and led to them. Men cannot always be cutting off each other's heads, or dealing in wholesale massacre. But false principles are perpetually bearing fresh crops of anarchy, and disturbing the re-establishment of order as fast as nations seek to re-constitute themselves as civilised communities.

Different
phases of
the first
French
Revolution.

The French Revolution had up to the 13 Vendémiaire passed through three stages of national fever. *First*, the period of wild excitement and visionary enthusiasm, during which everything that existed was rooted up, and all that men had believed in was

rejected, in pursuit of the phantoms of Utopian perfectibility. *Secondly*, the terrible reign of anarchy. *Thirdly*, the state of collapse, in which nothing was left but corruption, imbecility, and exhaustion.

We now approach a fourth crisis, which is common to all these revolutionary fevers—viz. the re-establishment of order by the intervention of military force. In reviewing the earlier stages of the Revolution, it is worthy of remark that the military ingredient was almost entirely absent from all those great revolutionary crises of which Paris was the centre. When we recall the names of those who figured in the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, or the Convention, we can scarcely find the name of one (with the exception of La Fayette) who had ever borne arms, or been professionally a member even of the lowest grades of the army. The troops themselves at the beginning were equally infected with the revolutionary fever. A number of soldiers, chiefly privates, lent their aid in taking the Bastille, in July 1789, and probably mingled with and directed the populace in the attacks on Versailles on October 5th and 6th, 1789, and on the Tuileries on August 10th, 1792. But it was merely as individuals they were associated with these movements. The National Guards appeared to be the only bodies having any discipline or acting as regiments who took any part in these transactions. The National Guards then, as ever afterwards, appear to have been a very loosely organised body, partaking more of the civil than of the military character ; never available for any

None of the Republican Generals take any part in the Revolutionary conflicts of parties.

permanent service, and only capable of a certain fitful and spasmodic action in moments of popular excitement. The army, indeed, played a most important part at this early period of the Revolution; but it was on the frontiers, in repulsing the foreign enemy, or in the provinces, as at Lyons, Toulon and La-Vendée, in combating the Royalists, that they signalised their attachment to the Republic. We see no trace of the army, acting as a body under military leaders, taking any part in these great convulsions, of which Paris was the centre. Their allegiance to the Convention, even in its worst moments of violence and anarchy, seems never to have wavered. Dumourier, shocked and estranged by the excesses of the Convention, seems to have intrigued to endeavour to induce his army to follow him to Paris and protect the life of Louis XVI.; but he entirely failed, and only escaped with his life by flight within the Austrian lines. La Fayette also was driven to seek the same refuge. The numerous gallant young generals—Hoche, Marceau, Moreau, and others—whom this period produced directed all their energies against the foreign enemy, and never sought to take any part in all the internal contests of which Paris was the theatre.

New phase in Revolution: the ascendancy of military force.

After the fall of Robespierre and the Terrorists a new phase was gradually displacing the old revolutionary paroxysms. The remaining leaders no longer inspired the same dread or awakened the same enthusiasm as had been kindled by the earlier chiefs of these contending parties. A new period

was arriving, when the military element was prepared to obtain that preponderance which it never fails finally to attract at the close of periods of democratic triumph. The final overthrow of democratic sovereignty was at hand, because, in the words of Meg Merrilies to Dirk Hatteraick, 'the hour was come, and the man.'

The lump of the Terrorists, under Barras, Tallien, and Carnot, had appeared desirous of carrying on affairs with moderation, and of heading a sort of reaction in favour of more settled government. The Constitution of the year Three, inasmuch as it divided the legislative power between two Assemblies, was rather more Conservative in its principle than had been its predecessor; but these men, however mildly they might propose to exercise power, desired to retain it, and introduced provisions into the new Constitution which provided that a majority of the members of the old Convention should be re-elected. It is by no means certain that this provision was not a wise one in the interests of order. The Convention was a formidable name, and the leaders, Barras, Tallien, and Carnot, were not free from participation in some of the worst excesses of the Reign of Terror. Still they had combated and overthrown it, and, when liberated from the rule of Robespierre, had shown every disposition to revert to a healthier and milder policy. They had committed themselves to open hostility against the remaining partisans of anarchy and terror, by waging war against the Jacobins and closing their club.

They were men who had had some practice in affairs, and they might be considered as the *de facto* government of France. The hostility which they inspired was traceable rather to their previous complicity with Robespierre and Danton than to their actual policy, as far as it had been displayed. The sections of Paris who were opposed to them could only inaugurate a new and unknown policy under new and unknown leaders at the expense of a fresh revolution.

It might well be doubted, even by the most Conservative of Frenchmen, whether the most prudent course might not have been to support the actual Government rather than to plunge again into the untried changes of a new revolution. I state these reasons because it has sometimes been made a matter of accusation against Napoleon Bonaparte that, in his first public acts, he appeared as the champion of violent revolutionists against a more moderate party. I do not think him open to grave censure upon that ground. As a young and unknown military officer, he might well have considered that obedience was due to the commands of the *de facto* Government, nor were the principles and policy of the contending parties so fully defined as to make it at all certain whether he was better promoting the cause of order by serving or opposing the existing rulers. All that we know of the early life of Napoleon Bonaparte leads to the conclusion that he was then, as ever after, the opponent of Jacobinism. His friend Bourrienne mentions in his

Memoirs that, when walking together on the quays on the day of June 1792, when the mob of Paris insulted Louis XVI., and forced him to show his face at a window of the Tuileries with the red cap of Liberty upon his head, that the indignation of the young military student was extreme, and that he exclaimed, 'How easily could I disperse *toute cette canaille-là* with a few pieces of artillery and squadrons of horse!' Probably when Barras, who had had some opportunity of noting his military talents at the siege of Toulon, offered him the command of the forces of the Directory, he did not weigh very scrupulously the rival merits of the contending parties. As a soldier he obeyed the orders of the Ministry, and he probably felt that he was also obeying the instincts of his own ambition in accepting so important a command. So complete a triumph over the far more numerous but ill-disciplined forces arrayed against him exhibits another instance of the invincible ascendancy which is always obtained in the long run by regular troops over armed mobs or half-disciplined irregulars. Peculiar circumstances may give a temporary success to the amateur soldiers of the hour, but in any prolonged struggle, if the disproportion in numerical strength be not overwhelming, the victory will always rest with regular troops.

First successes of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The powerful aid of the young warrior on this important occasion was rewarded by the command of the Army of Italy, and it is not necessary to remind the reader of the rapid series of victories

Appointed to command of Army of Italy.

which awakened astonished Europe to the fact that a military genius of the highest order had appeared upon the stage. Montenotte, Lodi, Arcola, the fall of Mantua and Castiglione, raised at once the fortunes of France and the reputation of the young general. Nor need I recall his politic withdrawal from Europe into Egypt, nor his opportune and well-calculated return to Paris at a moment when the Directory had become generally discredited in public estimation, and the Revolution itself had entirely outlived all that enthusiasm which it at first inspired.

The 18 Brumaire not only the overthrow of the Directory, but the extinction of the Republic.

On the 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799) the Directory was overthrown, and with it fell the Republic; for although it nominally existed for four years longer, yet in point of fact Napoleon became the absolute sovereign of France from that day. The proclamation of the Empire in 1804 only consummated an act which was virtually completed when the Directory was extinguished and the representatives expelled from their hall of meeting at the point of the bayonet. In all the previous crises of this eventful period there had been great excitement, imposing demonstrations of popular force, outpourings from the Faubourg St.-Antoine, hordes of the Marseillais marching upon the capital, much noisy vapouring, some blood spilt in the streets and more afterwards on the scaffold. But on the 18 Brumaire the Republic fell almost without a struggle or a sound. Not a blow was struck in its defence, not one effort was made to rally its adher-

ents to the rescue. It quietly subsided—so quietly indeed that, as its name was still preserved, neither France nor Europe had been aware that it had ceased to exist, and that a new dynasty had begun to occupy the vacant throne of the Bourbons.

Thus perished the first French Republic, following so exactly the course of our own Commonwealth, that the narrative of one seems almost to describe the other. Thus closed the first act of that great French Revolution which is still invoked by all the disciples of Continental Liberalism as the great epoch of the dawn of Liberty, and a most important step in the regeneration of mankind. ‘The principles of the great Revolution’ are still appealed to by Liberals of all shades as containing the germ of human progress. These principles appear to be comprised in the doctrines of the sovereignty of the people, the universal equality of mankind, and the brotherhood of general love and peace pervading the people of all nations.

What were
the practical
results of
the first
French
Revolution?

Let us endeavour to trace what progress was made in realising these speculative theories. Much had been effected in the way of destruction. The throne of the Bourbons had been overturned, the territorial proprietors had been visited by wholesale confiscation, a vast proportion of them had been actually despoiled of their estates, while the remainder were subjected to a new law of succession, which deprived the owner of all power over the distribution of his property after his decease, and invested in the State the exclusive power of

distributing it according to a law which enforced a perpetual subdivision of it. All titles of honour were abolished. The public exercise of religious worship was terminated, and religion itself was destroyed. The kingly office was abolished, and all power vested by the first Constitution in one Assembly, chosen by universal suffrage. Marriage was declared a civil contract. Nothing could be more sweeping than these measures of destruction. But, when we come to inquire by what new measures the old ones had been replaced, or what had been the state of society which had been subjected to such violent changes, we find that nothing permanent had been established, nor any advance made towards the realisation of the principles which had been proclaimed.

Where was the sovereignty of the people? Did it exist during the Reign of Terror, or in the different parties contending for power in Paris, which successively gave the law to the provinces, and effected the most important changes, both in the constitution of the country and the depositories of power, without any reference to the bulk of the population? Where was that most precious of all possessions, personal liberty, and the right and power of free individual action, which is the end and aim of all political liberty? Nothing could be more grinding or more horrible than the tyranny exercised by the different parties from the overthrow of the kingly power to the fall of Robespierre, and nothing more uncertain and precarious than the subsequent condition of all social institutions. No man could

feel the slightest confidence in the continued possession either of his property or his personal freedom.

As for the reign of peace and universal brotherhood, France had been engaged in the most sanguinary wars with almost all her neighbours ever since the proclamation of the Republic. The conscription had been permanently established—the most tremendous interference with personal liberty which has ever existed. Let us only consider that 500,000 men and upwards, out of a population of about 10,000,000 of adult males able to bear arms, are taken from all their occupations and pursuits, and compelled to submit to the iron discipline of military service, the first principle of which is the entire subjection of the will of the mass of the soldiery to that of their superior officers; and this onerous obligation is not voluntarily contracted, but compulsorily enforced. What an immense interference with individual liberty did the establishment of this conscription involve! It almost obliges neighbouring nations, in self-defence, to adopt analogous institutions, and thus the Revolution, which was to have inaugurated perpetual peace as well as universal freedom, has consigned millions of men to a state of subjection, which, if more honourable and less degrading, is not, perhaps, less severe than that of the African negro. It would appear from this review that the changes wrought by the Revolution, at such an immense amount of national misery, had altogether failed to establish the sovereignty of the people, universal peace, and individual liberty, but had led to the adoption of the very contrary principles.

Effects of
the com-
pulsory
subdivi-
sion of
property.

With regard, however, to equality of conditions, much progress had undoubtedly been made. The territorial aristocracy had been thinned by the guillotine, had been ruined by confiscation, and new accumulation of wealth had been prevented by the law of subdivision. This law acts in two ways in preventing the increase of large incomes. In the first instance directly, by dividing them compulsorily on the decease of each proprietor; in the second place indirectly, by depriving the proprietors of a strong motive for the acquisition and increase of wealth in the desire to raise or to secure the elevation of their families in the social scale. This motive, or rather absence of motive, has acted very strongly upon French society during the last eighty years. A Frenchman is naturally very pleasurable and exceedingly frugal. These two somewhat opposite characteristics are reconciled by his cultivation of a taste for small, cheap luxuries and amusements, in a round of which he is contented to live, and the ambition which an Englishman finds a great means of gratification, in the acquirement of wealth, being wanting to the Frenchman, he passes life without being impelled to those strenuous exertions by which Englishmen in all ranks seek the possession of fortune.

Another and most important result has arisen gradually from the operation of this law. The frugal Sybaritism of the Frenchmen's existence would be entirely destroyed by the arrival in the world of a numerous offspring. They regard our

large English and Scotch families with horror. It somehow happens that the French marriage-bed seldom produces more than one or two offspring. They are like the cuckoo, which lays only a single egg. The result is apparent in the French census. During the eighty years which have elapsed the population of France has been almost stationary.

The existence of large territorial proprietors, so necessary to the civilisation of the rural districts, is constantly disappearing in France, and is replaced by a number of small proprietors, in many cases little raised above the condition of day-labourers. These men constitute, at the present time, the bulk of the French nation, and in France the rural far exceeds in amount the urban population. They have many virtues and good qualities as a class, but, constituting, as they do, an amount of population wholly out of proportion to the other classes, they give to French civilisation a stationary, and even a retrograde, movement, contrasting strongly with the restless excitement of the towns. But whenever laws violently counteract the natural inclinations of mankind, they are always mischievous in their consequences. The arbitrary interference with the right of the proprietor to dispose of his property after death paralyses the energies of men, and the dead level of conditions which it seeks to enforce is unfavourable to progress and to civilisation. Yet this is almost the only fruit of the first French Revolution which has survived its destruction. '*Le Français*,' said the first Napoleon, '*ne se soucie pas*

de la liberté, mais il aime l'égalité.' The spirit of democracy engendered in 1789, coupled with the vanity which renders a Frenchman impatient of any social superiority, makes him cling to this equality in the belief that he thereby cherishes liberty. In fact, it is the only form under which he recognises liberty at all. Even Napoleon, who destroyed so much the work of the French Revolution, did not venture to touch this law of equal succession.

The sovereignty of Napoleon firmly established by the victory of Marengo.

The 18 Brumaire swept away the Revolutionary form of Government, but before the new sovereign could apply himself to the process of reconstruction, the urgency of the demand for his services as a general summoned him to the theatre of war. During Napoleon's absence in Egypt the star of France had appeared waning. The victories of Suwarrow in 1798, and the advantages gained by Melas over Masséna and Suchet in 1799, had placed the Directory in a very critical position. Genoa was menaced, Masséna and Suchet had been separated, and the south of France threatened with invasion. It was in this condition of affairs that Napoleon effected the overthrow of the Directory, and established himself the supreme chief of the State. But his recent elevation had not had time to acquire solidity, and the consolidation of his power entirely depended on his retrieving the declining fortunes of the French arms, and restoring them to their former ascendancy. It was then that he conceived and executed perhaps the most daring and original conception of all his military inspira-

tions. Melas had driven Suchet back into France, and was on the point of forcing Masséna to surrender Genoa. His next step would probably be the invasion of Provence. A common general would have adopted the obvious plan of strengthening the French arms on the frontier, and repulsing the threatened invasion; but Napoleon formed a far loftier design. The passes of the higher Alps, in the midst of eternal snows, surrounded by impending avalanches, and destitute of roads, had ever been deemed dangerous and difficult even for single travellers. It was not without risk to life that these passes were traversed by the hardy peasants of those valleys. One of the most rugged and elevated of these was that of the Great St. Bernard, where, at an elevation of 8,000 feet, the Hospice or Monastery of St. Bernard had been erected to enable the charitable fathers to afford succour to travellers overtaken by storms. Never had the possibility of a large French army crossing this vast mountain pass suggested itself to the imagination of Melas. To effect it with secrecy and rapidity required the most gigantic preparations, and the most perfect order in all the arrangements. If the secret had transpired too soon, nothing would have been more easy than to have stopped the passage of the French army, and probably to have destroyed it; yet all this was planned and executed with most perfect success. The fortress of Bard was passed, and Melas, while pursuing his successes before Genoa, was thunderstruck by the intelligence that a for-

midable French army, under Napoleon himself, had crossed the Alps in a manner little less wonderful than flying would have appeared to him, and occupied the Milanese in his rear. The Austrian general does not appear to have been unworthy to measure swords with the greatest of modern conquerors. He gathered his forces together, and at Marengo was within an ace of turning the tide of fortune and crushing the French army. The opportune arrival of Desaix retrieved the fortunes of the day, and in the words of Napoleon himself, when he afterwards reviewed this passage in his life in his conversations at St. Helena, '*à trois heures j'étais battu; à cinq j'étais maître de l'Italie.*'

If, in our later days, the German campaign of 1870 will stand unrivalled for the wonderful exactness of its strategic combinations, and for the profound military science which it displays, the scheme of Napoleon's campaign at Marengo exceeds it in its originality of conception, and in the qualities of rare and inventive genius which it shows. The decisive victory of Marengo gained by Napoleon was attended by two results equally important to him and to Europe. Austria was defeated and subdued, and the tricolour again triumphed over the great European coalition. But the domestic conquest of the mighty warrior was not less complete or less important. The democratic Republic of France fell. Seventeen hundred and eighty-nine, with its metaphysical theories of the rights of man, with its visionary schemes of human perfectibility, with its attendant

associations of massacre and destruction, succumbed on that same battle-field, and the conqueror of Marengo returned to Paris the absolute ruler of France.

Napoleon had moulded, out of the fanciful scheme which the Abbé Siéyes had proposed, a Constitution which, preserving some slender and shadowy resemblance to a parliamentary government, virtually placed all the powers of the State in his own hands, totally unchecked by any independent authority. Louis XIV., in the plenitude of his power, was far less absolute. The Parlemens de Paris, claiming the right to register his edicts, gave some power of resistance, remonstrance, and discussion. The aristocracy of the country, although no doubt much under the influence of the Court, still possessed a certain weight of public opinion attached to its illustrious position and its educated intelligence, of which it could not, even if it would, altogether divest itself. But these and every other check and balance, which a wise policy aiming at once at Conservatism and freedom would have nursed and developed, had been crushed under the storms of the Revolution, and nothing else, I believe, was possible in the way of Government than the one mighty power which was embodied in the name and person of Napoleon. Great political changes sometimes take place so rapidly, and so silently, that their value and importance are not immediately understood, particularly by remote observers. Mr. Pitt, speaking in the year 1800, described Napoleon, in his lofty and

Erroneous
opinions
respecting
his early
political
principles.

eloquent style, as 'the child and champion of Jacobinism and the fiercest defender of its fanaticism.' I believe that in that sentence he conveyed a faithful impression of what was then the current opinion in England with reference to the new ruler of France. We had been so accustomed to see one kind of anarchy succeed another, and had viewed the whole nation as goaded on by revolutionary madness from one state of chaos to another, that we were not prepared to distinguish any difference between Napoleon Bonaparte and his predecessors in the bloodstained annals of the Revolution. No one has a higher admiration than myself for the character of the great English minister, but the phrase which I have just quoted is in all respects singularly incorrect, and exhibited the erroneous conception he had formed of the new actor upon the eventful stage. The description of Bonaparte was incorrect in every particular. He could not possibly be regarded as the child of Jacobinism. The little that is known of the opinions of his youth, which has transpired through the obscurity of his early life, indicates that he regarded the excesses of the revolutionary mobs of Paris with bitter scorn, and longed for an opportunity to chastise them. Such is the evidence given by his friend Bourienne on the occasion I have already referred to. It is said that he had some acquaintance with Robespierre's brother, but it is presumable that it was of the very slightest description, since it is nowhere stated that he was in any way associated with the political acts of that period.

His first known appearance is in the humble character of a subaltern officer of artillery at the siege of Toulon, in 1794, where he first displayed an instance of his military *coup d'œil* by selecting a point for the erection of a battery which commanded the harbour and roadstead, and compelled the retirement of the British fleet. This trifling service rendered in his capacity as an officer of artillery against a foreign enemy could not in any way have identified him with the Reign of Terror or the dictatorship of Robespierre, then about to fall. He seems to have been utterly unknown to any of the revolutionary factions of Paris, but his exploit at Toulon had made an impression on the memory of Barras, who was present at the siege; and, in their sore extremity of need, the Directory were, at his recommendation, induced to make trial of the young and unknown soldier. I have stated above why I have thought that this acceptance of this appointment involved no profession of political opinions, and was a mere act of military obedience; but certainly if he could be determined at that time the champion of Barras and the Directory, which he no doubt was for the moment, he could not therefore be termed the champion of Jacobinism. The Directory had overthrown the Jacobins, and very recently had commanded Pichegru to invade the Faubourg St.-Antoine, and had finally suppressed that terrible club. From that period his career was that of a conquering general, keeping studiously aloof from all political factions, until the moment arrived when

he could establish his own supreme power on the ruins of them all.

But the true political character of Napoleon began now first to be revealed, and he appeared in the capacity of the founder of a new dynasty, directing a Conservative reaction, and intent upon surrounding his throne with fixed and settled laws, and all materials of stable government which he could collect from the ruins of ancient institutions by which he was surrounded. This view of his character was never once taken in England at the time, and is indeed opposed to many of the preconceived opinions which, even to this day, continue to influence our judgment upon him. Yet it is not the less substantially correct. I believe that if the Bourbons had been restored in 1800, they could not have effected one-half of the Conservative reforms, or have revived to the same extent what was not utterly dead in the old institutions of the country, as Napoleon effected.

In the first place, his code of laws remains a monument of just and enlightened jurisprudence. After seventy years it still continues to direct all the relations of society, civil or criminal. Imperfections may doubtless be found in it, but, on the whole, it appears inspired by principles of sound justice and enlightened equity.

Another and still more important work was effected in the restoration of religious establishments. There is no more melancholy and no more impressive lesson taught by the French Revolution than

All religion extinguished during the progress of the Revolution.

the entire overthrow which it accomplished of all religion. During the storms of that eventful period no cry was ever raised for succour by an expiring faith. No arm was ever raised to defend the altars of a religion which, for one thousand eight hundred years, had reigned over the most civilised portion of mankind. How much of intense enthusiasm, how much of stern fanaticism, how much of ardent faith which inspired men to suffer and to die on the one hand, or to fight and conquer on the other, had not religion caused; and yet here, in this portentous French Revolution, it dies and makes no sign. All the possessions and property of the Church are plundered, its churches are converted into barns or stables, and its priests hunted into exile or to death. Yet during all the struggles of these eventful ten years, the contests of Royalists, Republicans, Girondists, Terrorists and the rest, the voice of any religious party whatever is never heard. No movement in defence of the faith, or of any sect or denomination of Christians, is anywhere discernible, either ruffling the surface or working below the level of society. No protest is ever heard; no petition is ever presented in favour of any form of religion; no organ of the press appears as its advocate; it perishes and makes no sign, and yet this is a country in which religious differences raged, zeal was kindled, men fought for their faith and died for their faith by thousands in former times. There was as much religious enthusiasm among French Huguenots and as stern a fanaticism among French Catholics as in

any European nation, but all had perished; and that great religious sentiment, which in one shape or another seems to be a part of the very instincts of our nature, appeared to have died out.

The policy of Napoleon on this question was among the most remarkable of its features. No one ever supposed, and he did not himself pretend, that he was a devout man. He ever seems to have rejected the cold doctrines of atheism, and to have entertained a firm conviction of the existence and attributes of the Deity. Beyond this recognition of the Great First Cause, he seems to have adopted no form of faith; but his powerful mind perceived the absolute necessity of the religious element as a constituent part in all human society, and he determined to recall into existence this dormant sense, which had been so long without exhibiting the faintest sign of life. It does not appear that he was urged to this course by any external movement whatever. We hear of no deputations of priests, of no memorials presented by the pious, of no publications emanating from any quarter, expressing a want, and asking for it to be supplied. When we consider how much the whole worship of the Roman Catholic religion hinges upon the ministrations of its clergy, who are universally made the channels through which the current of religion must flow, we can better comprehend how complete must have been the suppression of all the practices of devotion consequent upon the virtual abolition of the order. When Napoleon determined to restore it, the act

seems to have been one emanating from the exercise of his single will. We all know that one of his first measures was the creation of a new Church establishment, moderate indeed in its proportions compared with the wealthy corporations and richly endowed Church of former periods, yet sufficient to supply to the whole nation a provision for the decent maintenance of the rites of the Catholic worship. In order to prove the spirit of toleration in which his plan was conceived, he accompanied this endowment with a moderate dotation to other religious sects, in proportion to the number of those who professed them. This great measure of religious revival seems to have been received with coldness and indifference. It even appears to have excited in many quarters more of ridicule than of reverence. M. de Fasenzac, in his interesting memoirs lately published, gives us an amusing instance of this in the consecration and inauguration of the newly created Bishop of Besançon. M. de Fasenzac was then a subaltern officer in a regiment stationed at that town, which was ordered to do duty in the cathedral during the ceremony. He writes, it would be difficult for us at the present time to understand all the feelings of contempt and ridicule which this ceremony inspired at that period. It was looked upon by the soldiers as an unmeaning mummery. The whole of the proceedings were interrupted by cries, catcalls, noises, shuffling of the feet, and everything which could mark the contempt of the soldiery for the proceedings. But Napoleon was not disposed to

the Church
establish-
ment by
Napoleon.

tolerate such a breach of discipline and attempt to throw discredit on one of the most important measures of his policy. He immediately gave orders for the removal of the regiment to one of the most dreary quarters he could select—somewhere in the Pyrenees—where they were left to repent at leisure the result of their ill-timed levity.

Revival
of titles of
nobility by
Napoleon.

In another and very important particular, Napoleon reversed the decrees of the Constituent Assembly of 1789. He revived titles of nobility, and thereby aimed a deadly blow at one of the main principles of the Revolutionary code, the natural equality of mankind. He strengthened the order, and gave it additional weight and importance in the public mind, by creating all his most illustrious generals and marshals, barons, counts, and dukes. He skilfully selected titles which could commemorate her great deeds in arms; and, as these titles were generally drawn from foreign countries, he enriched them by large dotations of estates in the conquered districts, which might afford them the means of adequately supporting their dignities without directly offending that love of equality, which the law of equal succession of property was intended to preserve. He did not confine these creations to his marshals alone, but conferred similar titles on all the great civil officers of his government.

Napoleon seems to have cherished an inward sentiment of regard for the order of the nobility, although many circumstances combined to check any very open or decided expression of his favour

towards it. It was controlled by the strong prejudice against it which the Revolutionary period had left. It was also repressed by the hostility which the members of that proud order still, even in their fall, entertained towards himself. They ranked him with the adventurers who had been thrown up by the Revolution, and, faithful to the Legitimist creed, they rejected all alliance with the man whom they termed the Corsican usurper. But Napoleon did not return this hostility. In the first place, he was himself born a gentleman, not indeed a member of the great old families of France, but at the same time within the degrees of men entitled to call themselves gentlemen. It is not at all necessary to be among the more elevated ranks of nobility in order to share in its feelings and its sympathies. We may see examples of this at home. There is many a small English or Welsh squire whose name is scarcely heard of beyond the confines of his own parish, who is as proud of his ancient lineage as any Cavendish, Grosvenor, or Howard. It may be observed that, in all those cases in which the ancient noblesse sought him, they generally found ready favour. I will give as instances Count Louis de Narbonne and M. de Flahault, whose recent loss is still so much regretted by his numerous friends.

Another instance of his desire to revive the importance of the aristocracy is found in the fact that, wherever they had not been alienated by sales, the confiscated estates of the emigrants were restored to their owners on their return to France

Confiscated estates restored to owners by Napoleon.

after the decree which banished them had been rescinded. I do not believe that if the Bourbon dynasty had been restored in 1800, it could have ventured to carry so many measures of a decidedly reactionary character as were those accomplished by Napoleon. The Legitimists who, like our own Jacobites, have, during more than three-quarters of a century, preserved their allegiance to the Bourbon dynasty, inspire respect due to their unswerving fidelity; and the strength of this sentiment is apparent now and after so many years, so many revolutions, and so little effort made on the part of the representative of this dynasty to vindicate his claims, so powerful a party still adheres to this standard. To those whose attachment to the monarchical principle is of a less personal character, and who adhere to it because they consider that, in all large and highly civilised states, it affords the best guarantee for the security of society, and the real progress of nations, it may almost be a subject of regret that this allegiance could not have been transferred bodily to a sovereign so much more able to maintain the throne than the effete Bourbons. No impartial judge can, however, accuse Napoleon of being a usurper, since he had no concern whatever in the dethronement of the Bourbons. In the epigrammatic words of Mignet, 'He found a crown lying in the dust; he picked it up to take possession of it.'

Napoleon's
government
an
absolute
monarchy,

There is another point upon which we ought to do justice to the government of Napoleon. It is frequently called a military despotism. This description

is by no means accurate. A military despotism means a government carried on directly by the intervention of military force. It is a sort of permanent martial law. Many examples of pure military government may no doubt be found in Napoleon's government of the conquered states he invaded ; and they are sufficiently characterised in the Russian government of Poland and the Caucasus, to leave us at no loss to understand the nature of the distinction which I wish to point out. All governments, to a certain extent, are based in their ultimate result upon military force. Whenever the civil power is insufficient to cope with popular lawlessness, it avails itself of the aid of the military power ; and unless it had this resource to fall back upon, civil force alone would be quite unable to deal with popular insurrection, and all government would be at an end. Even in England, so jealous of liberty, and so suspicious of the army, numerous recent instances may be adduced in which the aid of troops has been invoked by the civil power in order to quell disturbances ; but we do not, therefore, consider ourselves as living under a military despotism. Even in the model Republic of America the employment of troops is not rarely resorted to ; and, if we can trust the narratives of some local disturbances, they use their arms without much mercy or forbearance.

but not
strictly a
military
despotism.

Such is not military despotism, and, during fourteen years of Napoleon's reign in France, from the 18 Brumaire to the abdication at Fontainebleau, it does not appear that the civil power was ever insuffi-

cient to carry on the government of the country. Prefects, judges, commissaries of police, jugés du paix, were the instruments by which the civil and criminal government of the country was carried on. Beyond the frontiers the veteran legions of the Imperial army fought the battles of their country, and carried its victorious eagles over Europe ; but it does not appear that they were ever wanted at home. From the 18 Brumaire, with the exception of Mallet's conspiracy, we hear of no disturbance of the ordinary peaceful and civil administration of the law.

It is no part of the purpose of this essay to write the history of that extraordinary epoch—the reign of Napoleon. I shall not attempt to follow him from victory to victory, or to trace the steps by which the greatest conqueror Europe ever saw was tempted to overleap all the bounds of prudence, and was involved in a ruin as complete as his elevation had been miraculous. My subject is the Revolution, and I only dwell on the history of Napoleon so far as he has any relations with it.

My first position is, that the Revolution of 1789 was virtually destroyed after the 18 Brumaire ; that all its principles were condemned, and all its acts reversed ; and that the whole policy of Napoleon was directed to extirpate the traces of its passage. His policy was to revive, if not the *ancien régime*, which was too thoroughly destroyed to admit of being reinstated, at least a state of society as analogous to it as the altered circumstances of the

country admitted, governed by a monarch more absolute than even Louis XIV., that monarch being himself.

It was the general opinion in Europe, and particularly in England, for years after the fall of Napoleon, that these objects had been accomplished, and that the wild visionary dreams of 1789, or the horrible frenzy of the Reign of Terror, could never reappear. Such was not the view of Napoleon himself. He always recognised the existence of Jacobinism as a dangerous poison latent in the veins of France, and ever ready to burst forth. His contempt and aversion for the whole school of French political philosophers was extreme. '*Ces idéologues*,' as he always called them, 'would destroy an empire of granite.' At St. Helena he prophesied that, now that his counterbalancing authority was removed, Europe would become either *sansculotte* or *Cosaque*. Recent events have abundantly confirmed his foresight.

Nothing could, in my view, be more fallacious than the opinions so frequently and so carelessly entertained and promulgated in these days, than that the first French Revolution was the Aurora of Liberty in Europe; and that from its institutions, its principles, and its conquests over the past, spring all the improvements which are supposed to characterise modern civilisation. Some sort of invisible line is drawn in their own imaginations by writers of the modern school of French politics. I mean the more moderate and rational of them. I do not speak of

Louis Blanc, or of Victor Hugo, or of Proudhon, but of men of the school of De Tocqueville. Where is this line to be drawn? I have already shown that all the legislative anarchy and destruction of everything which existed in France, and the total failure to replace it by any new institutions, was the work of the Constituent Assembly and not of the Reign of Terror. The principles proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly—the sovereignty of the people, and the absolute equality of mankind—are thoroughly false in themselves, and the attempt to carry them out is the cause of all the failures which have strewn the whole soil of Europe with the wrecks of abortive constitutions.

Ignorance
in England
respecting
the state
of feeling
in France
at the close
of the war.

The anarchy which reigned in France during the ten years following the meeting of the States-General in 1789, and the constant state of war between that country and our own, which subsisted during the whole reign of Napoleon, cut off this country from almost all intercourse with the Continent. This circumstance added to the natural indisposition of the English to enter into foreign affairs. It is a national characteristic, arising probably in great part from our insulated position, that we never are able to identify ourselves with the thoughts and feelings of our neighbours, or to sympathise with their ideas. We always assume that, left to themselves, the people of other countries entertain sentiments and opinions similar to our own, and we never make any allowance for those wide differences of national character which introduce so much diversity into

the ideas and impressions of various nations. When we consider that to this natural and characteristic incapability of regarding circumstances from any other than our own point of view, is to be added our total exclusion from the Continent during a quarter of a century, it is easy to understand that at no period had we less practical acquaintance with the state of affairs in France, or the condition of French opinion and feeling, than immediately after the battle of Waterloo.

If my recollections of that period are correct, the pervading sentiment in England was shortly this. We conceived that the French nation had been thoroughly awakened from all the Utopian dreams which ushered in their Revolution. That they had been cured of all those illusions of visionary perfectibility, which had inaugurated that calamitous period. We imagined that, for the latter fifteen years, they had been groaning under the iron despotism of a military tyrant. That they were sighing to be emancipated from his oppressive rule, and prepared to hail us as friends and deliverers. We, on our side, entertained no hostility towards the French nation. We really supposed that, by delivering them from the yoke of Napoleon, we were conferring upon them a benefit which would be generally appreciated by the mass of the people. We believed that, warned of their past errors, they would gladly avail themselves of our assistance to erect an edifice of Constitutional Monarchy similar to our own. I really believe that it was in this kindly spirit towards

the French people that we approached them after the termination of that great contest. All our animosity was directed against the fallen hero, whom we supposed to be hated by his own nation almost as much as by ourselves.

Pre-eminence of England among the European states at the close of the war.

England was placed at the close of that struggle in a position of vantage which gave her all the power necessary to carry out these benevolent designs. Never during the whole period of our history had we stood upon so high a pinnacle of glory and of power. During the whole quarter of a century, although sometimes reduced to contemplate the victorious progress of our mighty foe from the shores of our island fortress, yet we never endured a humiliation or sustained a reverse. Our principles had been uniformly consistent. We opposed first the desolating anarchy of the first French Revolution, and next the domineering military ascendancy of France under Napoleon, which had grown out of that terrible storm. We had been the soul of the resistance which the rest of Europe had at different times offered to his ambition. Our vast pecuniary resources, our overwhelming naval supremacy during the latter years of the war, the extraordinary valour of our small but admirable army, led by the genius of Wellington, gave to England the highest position, and placed her in the foremost rank of that coalition which had saved the rest of Europe from subjugation. We were no friends to arbitrary power. The great body of the English people at that period adored their own Constitution, and felt the utmost pride in

that mixed government of King, Lords, and Commons, which had so proved its capability of uniting with the greatest amount of personal freedom and individual liberty ever enjoyed by a people the vigour necessary to wield and direct the national strength to the purposes of the loftiest policy. Never had the reputation of England been so bright, never had our influence been so completely in the ascendant in the councils of European Cabinets as at that proud moment. Never, I fear, shall we occupy such a position again.

We were desirous of exercising this influence by initiating a sort of mild political propagandism of our own. We did not wish to imitate the Jacobins, who proclaimed war against all governments, and a readiness to assist people who revolt against their rulers. All that we aspired to was to aid nations by our counsel and advice in forming a Constitutional government similar to our own, containing those three ingredients of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy, which we considered the perfection of political institutions.

I have already reverted above to those circumstances which rendered us more than usually ignorant of the state of France, and led us to imagine that the whole of that nation secretly sympathised with us in our contest with their mighty ruler, and were ready to accept as a boon from our hands a political constitution framed as nearly as possible upon the model of our own. These notions led us to form very erroneous conceptions of the state of feeling among

our neighbours. We were partly led into them perhaps by our constant tendency to judge of other nations by ourselves.

Parallel
between
our Great
Rebellion
and the
French Re-
volution.

The parallel between our own Great Rebellion in the beginning of the seventeenth century and the French Revolution tended to mislead us. They had so many features in common that we were led to pass over important differences between them. Although the Tudors and Stuarts were sufficiently inclined to strain the prerogative so as to grasp at absolute power, yet underlying these assumptions there was always in England a foundation of Constitutional Liberty, which furnished the popular and Parliamentary party with a certain legal and defined basis upon which to rest their resistance to the royal encroachments. But in France such a basis was entirely wanting. If 250 years before the States-General might have furnished the germ of such a Constitution, it had been entirely stifled, and France had been immemorially an absolute monarchy, tempered indeed by custom and certain influences of opinion, but resting upon no charter or recognised law. The French, therefore, had no previous institutions to fall back upon.

Some of our advanced Liberals of the present day are inclined to exalt to the highest pinnacle the character of Cromwell, and to render him the object of a sort of hero-worship, which they certainly would not have paid to him had they lived in his time. There are no doubt coincidences in the parts played in their respective Revolutions which suggest a comparison between the characters of Cromwell and

Napoleon, but, like all historical parallels, they differ in many important particulars which are apt to mislead the inquirer. Oliver Cromwell was the leader, the inspired prophet, the tutelary genius of the English Rebellion. If he did not originate it, he soon rose to become its mainspring. It was Cromwell who crushed the royal cause at Marston Moor and Naseby. It was Cromwell who brought the King to the scaffold in 1649. Cromwell conquered the Irish. Cromwell defeated the Scotch Presbyterians at Dunbar. He again extinguished the hopes of the royal cause at the battle of Worcester, and he dissolved the Long Parliament in whose name he had triumphed, and made himself the absolute Dictator of the British Empire in 1653.

Let us only consider what a host of enemies he must have left behind him at every step of his blood-stained path. Royalists, Scotch Presbyterians, Irish Catholics, Parliamentarians, every party in the State, every nation which constitutes the empire, all the principles to which men had adhered in that long and bitter struggle, were in turn trampled upon by the iron heel of this stern and fanatical soldier. What a vast amount of hatred must have dogged his footsteps; and let it be remarked, that all his victories were over his fellow-countrymen, all his triumphs were gained in civil wars. He had no national glories raised to counterbalance all the bloodshed and misery inflicted in civil strife. Whatever there was of violence, whatever there was of crime, whatever injustice or tyranny, whatever of cruelty or oppression

stained the annals of that English Rebellion, Cromwell was indissolubly identified with it.

In all these particulars the relations of Napoleon with the French Revolution were very different. Mignet—the French Tacitus—observes in one of his close and pregnant sentences, ‘*dans les temps de Révolution c’est un grand avantage que de paroître tard.*’ While Oliver Cromwell was the chief actor in the English Rebellion, if not from its very commencement, yet certainly in all its more important stages, Napoleon was an utter stranger to all the course of the French Revolution, and quite unconnected with its history till nearly its close. While Cromwell was identified with all the violence of that fierce struggle of parties which lighted up the flames of Civil War throughout the kingdom, Napoleon had no participation in those crimes which deluged France with the blood of innocent victims shed upon the scaffold. While Cromwell was the author of the trial and execution of Charles I., Napoleon was entirely free from the guilt of any participation in the death of Louis XVI. All the victories of Cromwell were won in civil war over his own countrymen; while, except in the one instance of the conflict on the 13 Vendémiaire, between the troops of the Directory and the forces of the Sections of Paris, I do not recollect any one instance in which the laurels of Napoleon were won in any contest over Frenchmen; nor does any one instance occur to my memory in which the *état de siège*, or martial law, was proclaimed in France during his reign.

Napoleon's
authority
main-
tained by
civil not
military
force.

I have already stated above, why I consider that the conduct of Napoleon in assuming the command of the troops on that occasion was not open to the grave censure which has been sometimes cast upon it. The question at issue was not one of principle—it was merely one of policy: whether the new Constitution should come into operation at once in all its completeness, or whether, by continuing two-thirds of the existing Assembly till a future election, an abrupt transition of power to new hands should be avoided. The Directory was the *de facto* government of the country, and it had been acting with moderation, and opposing the lump of the Jacobins. At all events, Napoleon was not a principal in the question. He acted only as a young military officer, as the instrument of the Government.

I have been thus particular in again going over this ground, because this was the first occasion upon which Napoleon appeared in a public capacity, as also the last in which he acted at all in a subordinate position. From the moment that he took the command of the Army of Italy he assumed a tone of perfect independence towards the weak government of the Directory; and this Battle of the Sections, which was the single occasion on which I can recollect his appearing in arms against any party of his countrymen, was also the last on which he seemed to yield obedience to any power in the State superior to his own. From that time his arms were turned solely against the enemies of France.

The Revolution of the 18 Brumaire, important

as it was at the epoch of a great change in the current of French history, was not a struggle in arms. Not a blow was struck in defence of that Republic which had so shaken Europe to its centre. Not a drop of blood was shed in its defence. The Members of the Council of Five Hundred were dispersed by the grenadiers as easily as the most insignificant mob could have been, and when they leaped from the windows of the Orangerie they vanished altogether. We do not hear of any attempt on their part to excite resistance. No leader, civil or military, ventured to put himself at the head of any opposing force. The Revolution appeared to have expended all its energies; it was perfectly effete, and died without a struggle or a sign at the mere sight of its conqueror. The 18 Brumaire could never be classed as a military conflict of any kind.

The power of Napoleon was raised and cemented by the grandeur of his victories over foreign foes. Austerlitz was his Naseby, Jena was his Dunbar, Wagram was his Worcester. He reigned over Frenchmen by restoring order at home, and by gratifying their national ambition and their ardent love of military glory. The real character of Napoleon's home policy appears to me to have been that of the counter-Revolution. He did not, indeed, restore the *ancien régime*, first, because the *ancien régime* was bitterly hostile to himself; and, secondly, because it was so broken to pieces that its restoration became almost impracticable. But he did revive most of its

component parts, though in a somewhat different form. He re-established an absolute Monarchy, not, as has been frequently alleged, a military despotism, not a grinding tyranny, but very much the same government to which the French had been habituated for centuries. He did not rob them of constitutional liberty, because they had never possessed it. He delivered them from the tyranny of the Democracy, or of the adventurers who in the name of Democracy had oppressed them. His government was not more absolute or more despotic than that of Louis XIV. or Louis XV., and it had recourse quite as rarely to the aid of military force. It was a government of law and order administered by fixed and regular tribunals. It was not in any respect a politically free government, a Constitutional or Parliamentary government, but it secured to individuals quite as much personal and individual liberty as they had ever enjoyed under the Bourbons, and infinitely more than they had possessed under the Republic.

Its greatest tax upon the mass of the people was its enormous compulsory levy of soldiers by the conscription, and perhaps its most teasing and vexatious interference with the free action of individuals was to be found in its passport system. Both of these had not been creations of the Empire, but legacies from the Republic. They would have been intolerable to the English, but they do not appear ever to have excited discontent, much less active resistance. The government of Napoleon appears upon the whole to have been generally acquiesced

Conscrip-
tion due to
the Repub-
lic.

in, and to have been suited to the genius and habits of the people, who had never enjoyed political liberty, or free representative institutions, and never appeared to be able to use without abusing them.

The supremacy of law and order are far more essential requisites to human society than are political liberty or representative government. Such is more particularly the case when in any community the authority of law and order has been suspended or destroyed. Every man feels that its restoration is a precious boon conferred upon himself and his nation. Napoleon granted this boon, and he coupled with it the gratification of the darling desires of a Frenchman's heart—that of national ascendancy and military glory. It is quite intelligible from these considerations, while Napoleon possessed a hold over the affections of Frenchmen which we English, who only looked upon him as a despot and a tyrant, never suspected. Yet its existence was sufficiently manifested by the return from Elba in 1815, when his march to Paris was a triumphal progress undisturbed by the shadow of opposition.

The dynasty of Napoleon fell under the contest with Europe in arms, which his unmeasured ambition had provoked. Had he retained his throne until overthrown by a revolt of the French, he would, in all probability, have died the sovereign of France, and very likely have transmitted his crown to his descendants.

I apprehend that in the settlement of Europe which followed his overthrow, the political con-

stitution which was granted to France was principally at the instance and through the influence of England. It is curious that Talleyrand and Fouché, who had been actors on the stage of public affairs during the stormiest periods of the French Revolution, and ministers of Napoleon through his reign, were among the most zealous supporters of a constitution on the model of England, and the advocates of an hereditary peerage against the inclinations of Louis XVIII.

The Charter granted by Louis XVIII in 1814 and 1815 was remarkable as being the only attempt made to form a Constitution similar to our own. It had its advocates among the wisest and most moderate of the Constituent Assembly of 1789, M. Mounier and M. de Lally Tollendal, at the head of a small number of adherents ; but they were utterly overwhelmed beneath the flood of democracy which then flowed. In 1814 and 1815 the utter failure of the democratic governments set up during the French Revolution, and the subsequent overthrow of the empire of Napoleon, prepared men's minds to imitate the British Constitution, the only government which had ever yet succeeded in giving a nation any permanent enjoyment of freedom and security. All the subsequent abortive trials made on the European Continent have failed. They have never been English, but French. There have been Monarchies surrounded by Republican institutions, according to the programme of King Louis Philippe. The Aristocratic element which, in the judgment of Con-

The charter of Louis XVIII. the sole attempt to found a constitution on the British model.

servative statesmen, is so essentially necessary to the system has been uniformly discarded. The extreme jealousy of aristocracy which has pervaded, not only the lower, but still more the middle classes, and most of all the literary men, has always excluded this essential ingredient of civilised society from all participation in political power.

Experi-
ment of a
mixed
constitu-
tion made
under
great dis-
advantages
in 1815.

When the experiment was tried in 1815 it was made under great disadvantages. Of all the passions and prejudices which have survived through the convulsions which had reigned in France for a quarter of a century, the love of social equality was almost the only one. The people constantly confused it with individual liberty and freedom, to which it is often diametrically opposed. They clung to it as the only real and remaining fruit of what it was still the fashion to call their 'glorious Revolution.'

Its establishment in France had been rendered still more difficult by the confiscations of property during the Revolutionary period, and by the arbitrary laws of succession. The existence of a wealthy class of landed proprietors had been destroyed, and this class is the key of the whole system. There were other obstacles in the hostility of the ultra-Royalist party, which revived after the return of the Bourbon dynasty. It was, perhaps, natural that this class should view with little favour what they regarded as an adoption of Revolutionary ideas.

We must recollect that the confiscations and robberies of the Revolutionary period were little more than twenty years old, and the old nobles looked to

the restoration of their estates as the natural sequence of the conquest of the Revolution in France. The necessity for sanctioning, by *ex post facto* concessions, all those violent acts was not admitted by them. The gradual formation of a new nobility out of the ruins of the old, recruited by the additions from the new men who had gained wealth and importance during latter years, was a process of regeneration for which they had neither time nor inclination. They soon formed, under the Count d'Artois, his two sons, and the Duchesse d'Angoulême, a powerful party in the State. The significant appellation of *ultras* was then first invented; and the phrase, '*plus Royalist que le Roi,*' then current in France, correctly described their opinions.

I do not think that either at the period, or subsequently, sufficient justice has been done either to the abilities or to the good intentions of Louis XVIII. At the very commencement of the Revolution he had always maintained moderately liberal opinions, and had been much opposed on those points to the political views then entertained at Versailles. He appears to have adhered to them throughout life, with a consistency springing doubtless from sincere conviction. Placed on the throne by his hereditary claims on the Restoration, he always appears to have accepted, with perfect sincerity and good faith, the rôle of a Constitutional Monarch. He was a man of far greater ability, and possessed much more of the tact of government, than was supposed at the time. He played off the different parties with skill and

Character
of Louis
XVIII.

dexterity ; and, while he emancipated himself adroitly from the tutelage of Talleyrand and Fouché, he repressed during his lifetime the rashness and imprudence of the old Royalist parties—‘ the aristocrats de Coblenz,’ as they were then termed, in allusion to the emigrant army which had been embodied in 1792. His ministers, the Duke de Richelieu and the Duke Décazes, admirably seconded his policy ; and we owe to him the peaceful transition which was effected from the Napoleonic to the Bourbon régime. In a remoter degree Europe is indebted to him for a considerable share in the maintenance of that long peace which the short-sighted views of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright persuaded them would be eternal.

We have no difficulty in understanding why the reign of Louis XVIII. was a period of tranquillity and reviving national prosperity, nor why those benefits failed to earn him that popularity to which they entitled him. The fruits of revolution were still agitating the whole political surface of France to its lowest depths. So many storms had passed over her, so many volcanic eruptions had torn and rent her, and their seething fires were still so far from extinguished, that it was impossible for any party in the nation to receive the blessings which he tendered for acceptance from his hands. Nothing that this well-intentioned and enlightened monarch could do could possibly remedy the incurable defect of the origin of his sovereignty. He was looked upon as the ruler thrust upon them by foreign bayonets, and his crown as a badge of defeat. The ultra-Royalists,

who sprang at once into a position of influence in the State, and exhibited an amount of power, which those unacquainted with the vitality of traditions in an ancient state never suspected, chafed impatiently at his moderate policy. They had no Anglomania. Many of them had lived among us during the period of their exile, or enjoyed our protection and partaken of our bounty; but they neither understood nor liked us; and the experiment of an Anglo-French Constitution was one which they viewed with supreme disfavour. The Republicans, who began to show signs of life, detested the powerful aristocratic element in our institutions; and the same cause indisposed the great mass of the rural population, who dreaded the claims of the former proprietors to their estates. So the Government of Louis XVIII., supported by the large army of foreign powers during the first years of his reign, was acquiesced in and tolerated with a sullen resignation; it never won any hold on the affections of the people. Still the conciliatory policy of this monarch and of his two ministers, the Dukes de Richelieu and Décazes, had produced its effect upon a people who had suffered too much from war and revolution not to appreciate the blessings of tranquillity.

If Charles X. had followed the prudent and moderate policy of his brother, it is possible that a Constitutional Monarchy might really have struck root in French soil. Had he even retained as his minister the able and sagacious, although ultra-Royalist, M. de Villèle, he might possibly have held his ground. But

Rash and
blind
policy of
the ultra-
Royalist
party
under
Charles X.

he surrendered himself body and soul to the dominion of the *Parti-Prêtre*, narrow-minded and violent men, wholly unable to understand the temper of the people, or to measure the consequences of their own acts. They were not without a certain cunning and dexterity in party manœuvres. After the fall of M. de Villèle they favoured the establishment of the ministry of M. de Martignac, but with the intention in reserve to overthrow him on the first convenient opportunity.

The ministry of MM. de Martignac and de la Ferronais was a very remarkable episode in the history of the second Bourbon Restoration. M. de Martignac was a statesman of very considerable ability. His policy was far more enlarged and liberal than that of M. de Villèle. He was a minister something of the type of Canning and of Palmerston. He was a sincere Royalist, although not an ultramontane bigot. He was a man well calculated to work with a Parliamentary Constitution; and, had he been honestly supported by the King and the united strength of the Royalists, might have carried on affairs, and avoided the catastrophe in July 1830.

But his retention of power did not suit the views of the Extreme Right, and his expulsion from office marks the first exhibition of a new party trick, which has been subsequently repeated on this side of the Channel, and always with fatal effects to those who had recourse to it. M. de Martignac was well entitled to the cordial adhesion of the whole Royalist

party, but he only possessed that of the more moderate portion of them. Still they were by far the most powerful section of that party. The supporters of the Martignac ministry on the Right far outnumbered the ultra-Royalist division, who were totally unable to secure a majority in the Chamber sufficient to carry on public affairs. They boldly resolved then to expel M. de Martignac's Cabinet, and to resort to a general election.

M. de Martignac had brought forward a measure to increase the number of votes in the municipal councils. This measure, although having a popular appearance, in fact rather tended to strengthen the Royalist party, as a large proportion of these votes would have been drawn from the rural districts. It was determined by the ultra-Royalist party in the Chamber to overturn the Ministry upon this measure by uniting their forces to those of the Liberal side of the Chamber in opposition to it. No permanent coalition of these two parties was intended or proposed. They merely united their forces on this single question in order to place M. de Martignac in a minority, and thereby expel him from office. This manœuvre was successful, as it indeed has frequently proved in other instances, but always with fatal effect to Conservative interests. It is not difficult to understand why this should be so, or to trace the ruinous effect of such an unprincipled policy.

Overthrow
of the
Martignac
adminis-
tration.

Constitutional Monarchy in England was always carried on until the Reform Bill of 1832, by two Parties who contended for the possession of power.

The Reform Bill of 1832 introduced into the House of Commons a third Party, whom we term Radicals, Advanced Liberals, Men of Movement, or by any other appellation; but they all are meant to designate Democratic principles of a more extreme character than any which had been hitherto entertained by either of the two older Parties in the House. Now, wherever these three divisions exist in a popular Assembly, and wherever each of them possesses a certain amount of numerical strength, it is frequently possible to overpower one by the temporary coalition of the other two upon some vital point.

In England, practically, government has been carried on, since the Reform Bill, by the more moderate section of the Liberals, receiving all those who were more nearly assimilated to the old Whig party, and a certain *quasi* support from the more advanced section. The two together, comprised under the general and vague term of Liberals, outnumbered the Conservatives; nor was there any very flagrant inconsistency, or desertion of principle, in such a distribution of Parties. The case is very different when the Moderate Liberals are ejected from office by some temporary coalition of Conservatives with the Extreme Left. It is manifest that in such instances one or both of these Parties must sacrifice opinions and principles to gain an immediate triumph over a Ministry; and, wherever such a manœuvre is practised, the temporary alliance must lead to the defeat of the Ministry occupying a middle position between the two.

This was exactly the case which occurred in the struggle in the Chambers in 1829, and the consequence was the expulsion of the Martignac Administration, and the advent to power of Prince de Polignac, the Parti-Prêtre, and the ultra-Royalists. Now the only case in which such party tactics could have been successful, would be where the Ministry succeeding to office was popular in the country, and could by resorting to dissolution obtain that majority which it did not possess in the existing Chamber. If Prince de Polignac and his friends imagined that they would be successful in such an appeal, they strangely misunderstood the temper of the constituencies and of the country at large. The result of the dissolution tended greatly to strengthen their opponents on the Côté Gauche. Reduced to a hopeless minority in the Chambers, in which they had been considerably weakened by the very means which they were sanguine enough to hope would give them a triumph, they were compelled to one of two courses. If they adhered to the principles of Parliamentary Government, and abided by the Charter granted by Louis XVIII. on mounting the throne, they had no other course but to cede their offices to their opponents, and accept the position of a Parliamentary Opposition; or to attempt to set aside the Charter altogether by the undisguised assumption of arbitrary power. They chose the latter alternative; and, by their rash attempt to govern by *Ordonnance* in July 1830, they provoked the revolt of Paris, which ended in their own utter ruin.

Defeat of
Prince de
Polignac's
attempt to
govern by
ordon-
nance.

The history of the first Bourbon Restoration and of the circumstances of its failure is so well known, and so much within the personal recollection of men still existing, that it seems almost a tiresome repetition of what newspaper articles and contemporary reviews have already taught us, to recapitulate them. Although, however, this is no doubt true with respect to the events themselves, the erection of the barricades, the fighting in the streets during the 'glorious three days,' Charles X.'s flight to England, and Louis Philippe's successful surprise of the vacant throne, are events which still appear so recent as to need no retrospective review of them. But although such is undoubtedly true with respect to the bare details of the events themselves, yet our subsequent experience of the results which have flowed from them during upwards of forty years invest them with a new importance.

I have remarked above, that the Revolution of 1789 was practically closed by the 18 Brumaire, which destroyed and reversed all that it could of it, and substituted a Monarchical form of government, diametrically opposed to all its principles. The Restoration under Louis XVIII. was not altogether a reversal of all this. It was an attempt to graft upon Absolute Monarchy, which had been revived by Napoleon, a Parliamentary and Constitutional form of government similar to that of England. It had been no popular Revolution; it had been an experiment originating very much from English influence, and promoted by the admirers of England, to graft

upon the absolute empire of Napoleon our own mixed form of government.

Now one great consequence of the Revolution of July was the utter failure of this experiment. The attempt to form a Constitution of a mixed character, composed like our own, of a King, an hereditary Chamber, and a popular Assembly, had entirely failed. The second momentous result was, that whatever might have been the merits or the demerits of the question, whichever of the two parties was to blame, however unjustifiable in principle or mistaken in policy might have been the rash proceedings of Prince de Polignac, however well merited the failure of his *coup d'état*, and the expulsion of the elder branch of the Bourbons, the fact remained, that the regular Government, wielding the forces of the State, had been overthrown by a popular insurrection, and vanquished in a street fight; and that the mob of Paris had again overturned a throne, and given the law to France, which passively adopted the consequences. In the July Revolution, 1789 was resuscitated from its ashes, and the Revolutionary epoch, which it had been supposed that the 18 Brumaire had closed for ever, again appeared.

Fall of
Charles X.

This vitally important consequence of the Revolution of July 1830 was perhaps less evident at the moment than when viewed by the light of subsequent events. The rising of the Parisian population against the Ordonnances was so wantonly provoked by the infatuated rashness of the ultra-Royalists, and

was so gross a violation of the Charter so recently accorded by Louis XVIII., that all the sympathies, not only of Liberals, but of moderate Conservatives, both in England and on the Continent, were enlisted in favour of the insurrection. The stupidity with which the Polignac Ministry had rushed upon this mad course was equalled by the imbecility and utter blindness they displayed in conducting it. Such an enterprise demanded great caution, long and careful preparation, and an overwhelming amount of military force. The temper of the army should have been thoroughly ascertained, and the command placed in the most able and trustworthy generals. It was no light matter to throw down the gauntlet to the warlike population of Paris, particularly as the National Guard had been so recently disbanded in disgrace, while they were still allowed to retain their arms. There never was a design so audacious attempted by means so inadequate. The ordinary garrison of Paris—the Royal Guard—were not reinforced by any additions of troops drawn from the provinces. When they were called into action, they were not provided with food or ammunition for more than a very brief period. They were employed more like a police than an army; and when discouragement and disaffection appeared in their ranks, no energetic measures were taken either to strengthen or to reanimate them. The Government, who had still a strong military force at Rambouillet, upon which, if the King had retreated, he might still have established his cause, was never

called into action, and the Royal family, panic-stricken, fled from France with a precipitation as inglorious as their enterprise had been rash.

Great and daring deeds require vigour of policy and courage in execution, and if they do not justify, at any rate dignify a cause, and elevate the actors in it above contempt. But there were no such redeeming features in the abortive schemes of the Polignac Ministry. They wantonly provoked the utter defeat which overwhelmed them ; and the Bourbon monarchy and the Restoration crumbled into dust, pursued not only by the exulting triumph of its enemies, but by the bitter condemnation of the friends of order and Conservatism throughout Europe, who had placed it upon the throne so recklessly destroyed. There was no friend of order, no Conservative statesman throughout Europe at that moment who would not have protested, with all his energy, against the suicidal policy of the Polignac Ministry. If they had supposed Nesselrode or Metternich, or our own wise and sagacious Wellington appealed to at this juncture, no one can doubt that they would have protested with all their energy, and with the weight which their long experience of revolution would have afforded them, against a course which madly destroyed all that their wisdom had laboured to build up from the commencement of Napoleon's fall. Those who have cause to curse the memory of the Polignac Administration are not the Jacobins and Communists, whom they have let loose again upon the world, but the Royalists in

Consequences of it to the European Conservative cause.

France and the Conservatives throughout Europe, on whom they inflicted so deep and irreparable an injury.

As, however, is so frequently the case at the period when such movements take place, their tendency was not thoroughly estimated at the time, nor was the danger which loomed in the future foreseen. According to all our English ideas, the Polignac Government had placed itself so flagrantly in the wrong, its attempt appeared in our eyes so utterly unjustifiable, that all our sympathies were aroused against it. M. Ouvrard, the great financier, made an observation on the eve of the appearance of the *ordonnance*, the sagacity of which was fully justified by the event: '*Le premier des deux partis qui sortira de l'égalité sera perdu.*' It was only fifteen years before that Louis XVIII., on being restored by the arms of the allies to the throne of his ancestors, had propitiated his subjects by according them the Charter; yet without any act on the part of any portion of the people, without even any revolt of the Parisian populace to excuse this arbitrary breach of that solemn engagement, this rash and short-sighted ministry throw the Charter to the winds, and attempted the re-establishment of arbitrary power.

Such a high-handed proceeding ought at least to have received the baptism of success to enable it to impose upon the judgment of Europe. But when it was discovered that it had been the most miserable of miscalculations, that it provided no means whatever to ensure success, and that its dense

blindness had invited failure, the indignation of the Conservative party throughout Europe exceeded that of the most advanced Liberals. In England especially we had always looked forward to the gradual consolidation of a mixed form of Government similar to our own, and the defeat of this policy, through the folly of the very men whom we had rescued from exile and restored to power, excited both indignation and contempt. The wisest course, under the circumstances, was undoubtedly that which was adopted, by placing Louis Philippe, the next in the order of succession, upon the throne in the room of the fugitive king. This step was carried out with promptitude and decision by the heads of the Moderate Liberal party in the Chambers, who gave the Republicans no time to agitate against the principle of royalty.

Another consequence of the Revolution of July 1830 was the renewed predominance which it gave to Paris over the rest of France. This disastrous result greatly weakened the authority of the governing power and facilitated the success of revolutions. From the very commencement of 1789 Paris has been the crater out of which the successive eruptions of the revolutionary lava have flowed. One of the first objects of the leaders of the mob was to force the King to transfer the seat of Government from Versailles to Paris, which was effected by the popular outbreak of the 5th and 6th October 1789. It may not be very easy to measure the effects of this bold stroke of the Revolutionists at

The Revolution of 1830 confirms the ascendancy of Paris over France.

that time. It placed the King completely at the mercy of the leaders of the violent party in Paris. Had he retained a position of a certain independence at Versailles, it is possible that a better resistance might have been made to anarchy and Jacobinism. Whatever might have been the case at that time, it is quite certain that the virtual Dictatorship of Paris and the general submission by the rest of the country to any form of Government which succeeds in getting the power into its hands, is a strong incentive to the enterprise of ambitious spirits. It seems to be only necessary for any set of men, however obscure and however desperate, to organise an armed revolt of the excitable mob of Paris; and if they are successful in carrying their object by a *coup de main*, and deposing the existing authority, they have but to issue their mandates from the seat of Government, and all France yields an unquestioning obedience to them. It is quite evident that any Constitution or form of Government whatever which rests upon such a foundation has its roots in the sand, and is liable to be overturned by the first storm. Yet the whole history of France for the last eighty years demonstrates how constantly she is exposed to the visitation of these moral whirlwinds, and how impossible it is that any regular Government can be consolidated as long as it is constantly menaced by such a peril. It does not appear that throughout France the slightest attempt at resistance was anywhere made by the partisans of Legitimacy. Everywhere the new form of Government was

accepted without struggle and without remonstrance; and Louis Philippe, by the promptitude with which he and the more moderate leaders of the Opposition took advantage of the occasion, effected a change of Dynasty with more facility than a change of Ministry would be accomplished here.

I have already said that the blindness and obstinacy of the Polignac Government led to this catastrophe, and that it is, of all the successive Revolutions which have desolated France, that which was the most clearly attributable to the culpable folly of the Ministers, and which reflects the least censure upon the leaders of the armed resistance it provoked. Nevertheless it was a heavy calamity to France and to Europe. It demonstrated the weakness of Government in France and the great chances of success which awaited a well-timed assault upon the governing power of Paris, and the certainty that it would be accepted by the provinces.

In England, we who are always inclined to trace the analogy between the course of our own Revolutions and theirs, were naturally led to compare the conduct and the fate of Charles X. with that of our own James II., and we were led to anticipate that the younger branch of the Royal stock of France might, like our own William and Mary, and sovereigns of the Brunswick line, consolidate the constitutional liberties of France, and found a mixed monarchy similar to that which had given to England such perfect liberty and security. But it is generally the misfortune of these historical parallels

Parallel
between
the Eng-
lish and
French
Revolu-
tions.

that they mislead us, because the circumstances are never exactly the same, and that there are always variations which are apt to produce different results. There were striking features of resemblance in the whole series of events from the commencement of our own Civil Wars to the expulsion of James II. and the elevation of the Prince of Orange and his Consort to the throne, which suggested a comparison with the French Revolution. Both began in the struggle between the people and the absolute power long enjoyed by the Sovereign; both led to the death of the Monarch upon the scaffold; both were followed by the elevation of a soldier to the supreme power; both conducted to the restoration of the heir of the late King, who in both cases retained the crown during his life and transmitted it to the rightful heir, who in both instances lost it by a very similar course of suicidal obstinacy and folly and was replaced by a successor in the next Royal line. But here the comparison ends.

I have already pointed out in a preceding passage the marked distinctions between Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon. It will be still more important to observe the causes which led to the different fate which awaited King Louis Philippe and the English Sovereigns. The first of these is to be found in the far wider extent of the Revolution effected by 1789. It aimed at destroying all the existing institutions upon which not only the French Monarchy but civilised society had hitherto been based. It was not only monarchy, but property, religion, all the

bases upon which civilisation had hitherto reposed, it aimed to subvert. It succeeded to a great extent in this work of destruction. It totally failed in replacing what it had destroyed by realising any of its chimeras, but it left the whole fabric in so shattered and tottering a state as to contain no element of stability.

In England the course had been very different. The disputes had been about political grievances, popular rights which, though often in abeyance, had never been abandoned, and Royal prerogatives which, though overstrained, were yet admitted to have an existence. The English Revolution had never struck directly at the rights of property, still less had it aimed at the subversion of religion. Doubtless the estates of many of the Royalists were confiscated or heavy fines exacted from them, but those were merely penal acts directed against individual political adversaries. The order of succession or the relations of landlord and tenant were never made the subject of attack, nor were the landed gentry or peerage as a class persecuted or despoiled. The contention between the religious sects was very bitter, but there was no assault upon the very foundations of all religious creeds. All the main walls and buttresses of our ancient institutions were undisturbed, and a compromise between the opposing factions was not impossible. They had much common ground of agreement between them, much that they mutually respected, revered, and loved, whole classes were not estranged from each other, and they coincided

upon a sufficient number of points ~~to~~ enable them to effect a lasting agreement.

Much, too, may be ascribed to the greater coolness and reflective nature of the English character, and to the fact that they possessed in all their existing institutions far more independence, liberty, and self-government than had ever been enjoyed by the French. These distinctions were not much dwelt upon at the time, and the public mind in England looked forward with considerable hope to the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy in France more stable and more in accordance with the feelings of the people than that of the fallen Bourbons.

Ultimate
results of
the July
Revolution.

It is at once a melancholy and an ungrateful task to trace the events which led to the utter disappointment of all those bright anticipations, and so wedded are many of our political parties to those hopes, that after their total failure has been demonstrated by sad experience, they still cling with invincible obstinacy to the illusions which were then generally entertained. But looking at the 'Three Days' of 1830 with the light shed upon them by subsequent events, we perceive that they were the destruction not merely of a Ministry, not only of a Dynasty, but of a political system intended to ripen in France into a stable form of government like our own. It was not immediately perceived that the convulsion of 1830 recalled into existence the baneful spirit of 1789. This resuscitation of the destructive principles of that calamitous period was not immediately apparent or even suspected, but from that period all the old dreams of human perfectibility, all the old daring and insane

speculations of exterminating all existing forms of civilisation, to replace them by fanciful fabrics of ideal governments, all the fanaticism of democracy sprang again into life and began to germinate in the restless nature of the French people.

We may remark that the whole power of the first Napoleon had been directed against these sophisms of the French philosophers, which were at once the objects of his supreme hatred and bitter contempt. So effectually had they been stifled that during the reign of Louis XVIII., and indeed up to the period of July 1830, they showed no signs of life. The discontents of the French people at that time had a more practical character. They regretted all connected with the army, all who had any sympathies with them in the remotest degree mourned over the eclipse which had cast its shadows over their glories. With the national pride and vanity of Frenchmen they bewailed the fall of the power and greatness of the era of Napoleon. They disliked the Sovereign who had been forced back upon them by foreign bayonets. They entertained a strong hostility to the pretensions and the claims of the ancient nobility. Having little of the sentiment of religion anywhere except in the rural districts, they viewed with aversion the influence of the *parti-prêtre* in the affairs of the State. But in all this there was little or nothing of Jacobinism, or of what is now called Communism or Red Republicanism. Such opinions were not, I believe, entertained even by the lower classes of the population of Paris.

I remember a conversation which I had somewhere

about the year 1821 or 1822 with a cabriolet driver, as we sat together on his vehicle, as was then the mode with those hiring these carriages. We were talking about the violences of the first French Revolution, and as we drove under the lanterns swung across the streets which then lighted Paris, we recalled the summary vengeance which the *sans-culottes* exercised on their unhappy victims, by hanging them up at once instead of the lanterns. The cab-driver remarked on this, '*Ah ça ! monsieur, dans ces temps ce gens-là croyaient qu'en tuant les riches ils deviendraient riches eux-mêmes. Pas si bêtes aujourd'hui.*' The honest cab-driver represented truly the opinion of his class at that time. He did not foresee the advent of M. Proudhon with the maxim '*que la Propriété c'est le Vol.*'

The first stimulus which the events of July 1830 gave to revolution lay in the fact that they were triumphs gained over the Government and military force by the armed population of Paris. It had been long since any conflict had been waged between the troops and the mob in the streets of that capital. I am not sure whether barricades had ever been employed in the first French Revolution ; at any rate they now for the first time acquired the notoriety they have since obtained in street warfare. The excitement which this victory of the populace over the military produced was further heightened by the similar successes obtained in the following September, by the popular party at Brussels over the Dutch-Belgic army, and which seemed to disprove the

superiority of regular troops over organised mobs, particularly when the latter are protected by the natural fortifications of stone houses and improvised ramparts of the barricades.

The next decisive proof that Democracy had not merely resisted an encroachment, but had acquired a large addition of force by its success, was proved by the abolition of the hereditary peerage. With this institution fell the hope of gradually raising a Constitutional Monarchy in France. The Monarchy of Louis Philippe became a throne surrounded by Republican institutions. The King, walking through Paris with his umbrella in his hand, appeared like a Royal 'Mrs. Gamp.' The floodgates of the Revolution were again opened, and although the tide flowed slowly and rose gradually at first, yet society was again menaced by the inundation.

The spirit
of Revo-
lution re-
awakened
by the
events of
July 1830.

There is a word frequently used by French political writers in a sense somewhat different to that affixed to it in English. The word is 'La Révolution.' When French writers make use of the word thus in the singular number, they do not mean the Revolution of 1789, or the Revolution of 1830, or any other particular episode in the history of civil convulsions. They mean to characterise the revolutionary element as it seems now to pervade modern society. They regard it as an influence always at work, always seeking the accomplishment of its ulterior objects, always exercising its energies to destroy something; acting like some subterranean volcanic agency, ever undermining all existing institutions, and ever

menacing the surface with convulsions and ruin. In this sense of the word 'La Révolution' was unquestionably roused into new activity, and endowed with added strength by the July Revolution.

The Days of July 1830 constitute the date of a new birth of the Revolution. Like some of those subtle and virulent diseases which, propagated by a mysterious contagion, occasionally sweep whole continents and then die out, the Revolutionary mania of 1789 had been supposed to have exhausted itself. Just as the Plague, which was the scourge of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even part of the eighteenth centuries, seemed gradually to recede and as latterly to become almost unknown, even in that hotbed of its ravages, Syria and Turkey, so we imagined that the *bonnets rouges* and the guillotine, the war of poverty against riches, the rancour of the lower classes against the higher, had been finally extirpated. We had yet to learn that these noxious mental and moral maladies resembled rather the cholera which pursues its desolating course from country to country during a certain cycle, then apparently dies out and disappears, but it will seem only sleeps, and bursts out again after an interval to renew its deadly march.

I remember, somewhere about the year 1819 or 1820, having some interesting conversations with a French gentleman of the old noblesse, the Count de Divonne, who was afterwards created Pair de France. M. de Divonne was by family connection united rather to the ultra-Royalist party, but he was a man of large and philosophic mind, and had a

warm admiration for the English Constitution and character. I remember speaking to him of the old spirit of Jacobinism, which I, in common with the rest of the world, regarded at that time as a thing of the past. I well remember his reply, which the later events of the Commune have vividly recalled to my recollection. 'You are mistaken in supposing,' said he, 'that either the principles or the Party of the Jacobins are extinct. They have been suppressed but not extirpated, and those who live long enough will see them break out again with renewed vigour.' Such was not the general opinion at that period. The fall of the Bourbons and the elevation of the House of Orleans was generally considered not only as a gain to free and Constitutional Monarchy, but as an additional security against the excesses of Democracy. The idea was widely prevalent that the atrocities and crimes of the first French Revolution were the natural manifestation of the first explosion of the popular force which, however terrible and disastrous to the generation upon which it burst, ultimately cleared the air, and left society unimpeded to work out permanent improvements. '*Le mal passe, le bien reste*,' was a sort of proverb which I frequently heard in the mouths of French politicians, even of the most moderate school. But subsequent experience has demonstrated that the previsions of my old friend, the Count de Divonne, were nearer the truth than the sanguine anticipations of the French moderate politicians.

More than eighty years have now elapsed since the

outbreak of the first French Revolution, and the present period appears to be one eminently calculated to suggest a review of the consequences which have flowed from it. Experience, indeed our latest experience, has afforded ample materials to enable us to form a judgment. That infallible test places in our hands a measure by which we may gauge the truth of all those speculations which have inspired the authors of this great movement.

Division of
the Revolutionary
epoch into
two parts,
the second
commencing
with the reign
of Louis
Philippe.

I think we may assume, for the purposes of this retrospect, that the whole of the eighty-three years which have elapsed since 1789, constitute a period which this great revolutionary movement embraces. All political and social changes in France, and in a great degree throughout Europe, originated in it, and are more or less a continuation of its action. I think that we may conveniently divide it into two periods of about equal length, the first dating from its commencement to the fall of the elder Bourbons in 1830, and the second bringing down its history to the present time.

The first, as I have previously noticed, comprised the period of the first wild outburst, the anarchy and horrors of the Reign of Terror, the imbecility of the Directory, and the re-establishment of Absolute Monarchy under the firm rule of the first Napoleon. His fall, which was produced, not by any internal revolt, but by the resistance which his ambition had provoked in Europe, led to the restoration of the ancient line of kings, and the attempt to form a

Constitutional Monarchy. Here it was hoped that the Revolutionary epoch had finally closed ; and perhaps these hopes might have been realised had the elder branch of the Bourbons been endowed with a greater amount of wisdom and policy. But their overthrow let loose all the passions which had been so long compressed. We who in England have during so many generations enjoyed the blessings of regular government, cannot fully estimate the force of those elements of disturbance which such social convulsions as those through which France has passed introduce into the community. There is, first, the whole tribe of wild speculative political philosophers, men often endowed with great talent, and sometimes with a sincere and enthusiastic belief in their doctrines. These men are incessantly occupied in building up new schemes of society, and they imagine that all the evils which afflict it spring from misgovernment. They have a panacea for every ill and a legislative remedy for every defect.

These speculative doctrines, or more properly speaking, shadowy visions, have a natural and powerful attraction for the young. In England we cannot fully estimate the power which all such visionary schemes exercised over the fancy of all men of enthusiastic and imaginative temperament, particularly those who have received an education as yet unripened by experience. In England, where a settled order of things has long existed, and has acquired a strong hold over the national mind, even

the most daring innovators and rashest experimentalists seek to fasten their crotchety plans on to something which already exists. They try to dovetail them into the old fabric, and to adopt at least some portion of it to lend stability to the new. In France, where successive Revolutions have shaken society to pieces, and where all coherence is destroyed, the idea of such a union between the old and the new scarcely exists. Unencumbered by any adherence whatever to fixed opinions, to laws, to institutions, either civil or religious, the young French politician gives free scope to his inventive genius, and constructs his castles in the air with as little reference to antecedent conditions of society as if he were launched into a new planet. Even human nature itself he passes over with superb disdain, since he fully believes that he can mould it, like plastic clay in his hands, according to his will.

Behind this band of visionary enthusiasts, who comprise a very large portion of the men under thirty, are ranged all the masses who are destitute of property. These men are constantly taught that their poverty, and the necessity that they are under to labour in order to live, are the results of unequal and unjust laws enacted and worked by the richer classes for their own profit. All these classes are deeply imbued with the Revolutionary spirit. They have known the intoxicating charm of successful revolt, and they are ever ready to yield to the maddening excitement of a new Revolutionary convulsion. Such are the elements of social

disturbance ever ready to burst forth which former convulsions leave behind them, and which are especially rife among a people so excitable and so destitute of all fixed opinions as the French.

I have dwelt with some pertinacity upon the division which I have made of the great Revolutionary epoch since 1789 into two periods, the first ending in 1830 with the fall of the elder Bourbons, the second commencing with the reign of Louis Philippe. The first saw the suppression of the old French Revolution by the arms and ascendancy of the first Napoleon, internal tranquillity and order, the reign of law and the revival of religion established by his authority, and after his fall the attempt to form a Constitutional Monarchy on the English model under the restored Bourbons.

Now it is very important to remark that this was the only attempt ever made to introduce Constitutional Monarchy on the English model among the nations of the Continent. Constitutional Monarchy as it existed in England, was not only something different, but positively antagonistic to the so-called Constitutional Monarchies which, since 1830, it has been attempted to found in different parts of Europe. The leading principle of the British Constitution was that of a mixed form of government, nominally designated as King, Lords, and Commons, and really embodying the monarchical, the aristocratical, and democratical elements in tolerably equal proportions. A balance between different forces is always a matter of extreme nicety and difficulty of adjustment.

With the elder Bourbons fell the only attempt to imitate the British Constitution.

The English Constitution had practically attained this result, and the fruit of it had been a greater amount of national prosperity, of security, and, above all, of individual liberty than had ever been obtained by any other form of government.

The absence of the aristocratic element destructive to all the following ones.

Continental nations when they tried to follow our example always rejected that portion of our scheme which was the connecting link of the whole, the cement which bound all the social edifice together into one compact mass. All continental framers of Constitutional Monarchies carefully rooted out the aristocratic element as something hostile to progress, to liberty, and, above all, to their favourite idea of equality. They constantly left their new structures destitute of that cement which could alone give them coherence and stability. They crumbled away under the first shock to be succeeded always by more democratic forms, which soon precipitated the nations into anarchy, followed by some species or other of military despotism.

Difference between English aristocracy and Continental noblesse. Important distinctive features.

It is important to remark that the word 'aristocracy,' as used in the English sense, conveys a meaning which differs materially from that affixed to it by continental politicians. The aristocracy in France or in Germany describes a separate class known as the nobility, and altogether as distinct from the rest of the community as if they belonged to a different nation. 'Noble' and 'Roturier' in the minds of Frenchmen of the old régime were ineffaceable distinctions between the privileged class and the mass of the people. In Spain the difference

is still more marked, and the Hidalgo retains his nobility, even when clothed in rags and reduced almost to beggary.

But in England the political acceptation of the word has a much wider meaning. It embraces whole classes far beyond the pale of the actual nobility. If this word is confined to the Peerage and their immediate relations, the whole body of the landed gentry are, even in the foreign acceptation of the word, as much nobles as the Peers themselves. They all are entitled to bear arms, many of them are of very ancient families, and can trace their pedigree to the Norman Conquest. Their ancestors have fought as knights in the battle-fields of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. They number among their forefathers Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Members for their respective Counties and Boroughs, and their families have thus long been incorporated with the local government of the country. But this class, which, under the name of *Noblesse de Province*, would be included among the nobility in any Continental State, is by no means the only one embraced within the limits of the English aristocracy. Men of great wealth, either hereditary or acquired, either when moneyed or territorial, are placed, by the fact of power and distinction conferred by their riches, among what we may fairly call the aristocratic classes, since they are certainly not in our sense of the word parts of the Democracy. Great professional eminence and distinction in the Church or in the Law is, again, a title of admission within the ranks

of what we call the Upper Orders. They constitute one society, the members of which may mingle upon terms of reciprocal equality. The higher members of the commercial or manufacturing classes are also comprehended within the limits.

Another great cause of amalgamation results from the large proportion of the junior and collateral members of the families of Peers entering the House of Commons. They are thus at once identified to a great degree with both these divisions of society. By their birth and connections they belong to the nobility, while as the Representatives of the popular branch of the Legislature, they are associated with the people. The Peers themselves do not constitute a separate and distinct order, but in their political capacity are the virtual representatives of all the upper classes of the community, with whom, both by sympathy and interest, they are closely identified.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the English aristocracy, and in which it differs so essentially from the Continental noblesse, is the readiness with which it opens its ranks to admit all new elements of power or of distinction, we may say of every kind. This idea of Aristocracy is something quite irreconcilable with the old foreign notions of a noblesse. They consider the English as a set of *parvenus* unworthy to be admitted into the privileged saloons of the Faubourg St.-Germain, or of the *crème de la crème* of Vienna.

But it is this very expansiveness, this very readiness to include within its ranks every new source of

power and distinction, which has given to the English aristocracy as a body its strength and influence. It is curious to remark how soon they become amalgamated together in spite of all those various shades and differences of origin, and it is this body considered as a whole which we must always remember has constituted the aristocratic portion of the British social system. The Peers may specially represent it in a political sense, but they do not alone constitute it.

It is deeply to be lamented that no attempt has ever been made on the Continent to incorporate the Aristocratic element into their institutions, because in almost all these States the materials existed, and only required to be used. The consequence has been perpetual disturbance over the whole Continent, and unceasing conflict between Absolute and Democratic Governments, and a constant sacrifice of all real individual liberty.

There is another peculiar characteristic which pervades English society, and imbues the whole of it with aristocratic feelings and principles. It is the result perhaps in great measure of that very expansiveness which I have noticed above, and which embraces almost all the possessors of property more or less within its influence. Every Englishman raised above the working classes, particularly every one who has been prosperous and successful in life, aims at creating an hereditary position, and handing it down to his son. Thus a respect for descent, and a sympathy with the advantages of wealth and position permeates through the whole community.

Aristocracy, as it exists in modern times, is founded upon hereditary property. We shall find, if we examine in a philosophical spirit this definition, that its truth will be apparent. Distinctions of rank, titles of nobility, armorial quarterings are grafted on this original stock, and they all rest ultimately upon this foundation. However stately the tree its roots are to be found to consist of this principle of hereditary property. Let hereditary property exist in any community, and it will soon create aristocratic feelings, even although it might be as barren of titles as a society of Quakers. While on the other hand, a nobility, such as exists in some parts of Spain, founded solely upon blood and descent, unable to support itself, and gradually sinking into poverty, is an anomaly, and a very mischievous one. In England, where the acquirement of wealth is so strong a spring of action with the whole upper and middle classes it thus becomes associated with the aristocratic principle.

Our English conception of Aristocracy therefore resolves itself into this. It does not constitute a separate class, or a separate order, or, as in some parts of the Continent, it may almost be termed, a separate nation; it is simply a body formed from the highest portion of the community. If we admit inequality of conditions as inseparable from all constituted social communities, and as widening as society approaches a higher state of civilisation, then a natural Aristocracy must exist in every nation. In England we have taken this element, which we consider

inherent in society and in human nature, we have utilised it, and, as it must always possess a great social preponderance, we have grafted upon it a share of political power. This ingredient we have practically found so far from constituting an evil or leading to an abuse, that we trace to its influence all the stability of the Constitution, the largest portion of the personal liberty we enjoy, and the best security against the encroachments of Democracy on the one side or Absolutism on the other.

These princip'es are totally repugnant to all the ideas of Continental Liberalism, and I believe it is this absence that has led to the failure of almost all the attempts to found Constitutional Monarchy or Representative institutions among the European States.

I recur again to the division, which I have traced above, of the French Revolution of 1789 into two periods, the first commencing with the opening of the States-General and apparently closed with the Peace of 1815; the second re-opening with the Paris Revolution of July 1830. I do not think that the full nature or real consequences of that event were at all estimated at the time, or indeed for many years afterwards. The great and glorious termination of the Long War, first against the anarchy of the Revolution, and secondly for the maintenance of the independence of Europe, was secretly distasteful to many, who regarded it as an attempt to arrest the progress of Civilisation. Others, with more truth and justice, really prized the representative institutions which

had been conferred upon France, and regarded the Polignac attempt to subvert them as a political crime; but at that period few suspected the slumbering existence of all the old principles of the first French Revolution, which, like some noxious reptile in a dormant state, requires only the admission of light and air and heat to quicken it again into a pernicious vitality.

No fears were then awakened of the possible revival of those anarchical principles. On the contrary the general feeling among men, even of moderate Conservative opinions, was one of hope and confidence in the new Monarchy of Louis Philippe. It was universally admitted that the Polignac Administration by its rashness, blindness, and violation of the compact which Louis XVIII., in the Charter he granted, had so recently entered into with the nation, had fully deserved its fate. The Revolution of July 1830 was regarded as a strictly defensive movement, and the prompt substitution of the junior branch of the Bourbon race for the elder, which had committed a political suicide, was accepted as an earnest of the adherence of the French nation to the principles of Constitutional Monarchy. In England we were further induced to place confidence in the future stability of the new Dynasty, by the analogy it presented in so many striking circumstances with the course of our own Revolutionary troubles, which had led to the establishment of the free and happy Constitution, which, for a period of nearly a century and a half had conferred such blessings upon the British Empire.

The Civil Wars and the tyranny of Cromwell might be compared to the first French Republic and the military sovereignty of Napoleon. The Restoration of Charles II. had a resemblance to the recall of the Bourbons under Louis XVIII. The blindness of Charles X. and the Polignac Ministry strongly reminded us of the infatuation which led to the expulsion of James II.; and the quiet tranquil substitution of the Orleans branch for the dethroned Dynasty, naturally enough suggested the substitution of William III., and subsequently of the Brunswick Line, for the exiled Stuarts. A close examination into the history of these two respective nations will doubtless lead a philosophical observer to trace many important distinctions between them. I have noticed several in the preceding pages, but nevertheless, in the course of events it will perhaps be difficult to find two pages of history which more closely resemble each other in their general features than our own history from 1642 to 1688 and the French Revolution from 1789 to 1830. We further looked forward with considerable confidence to the hope that the parallel would be carried on, and that the Constitutional Monarchy of King Louis Philippe would, if not precisely identical with our own, still gradually assume a character resembling it as nearly as the social condition of the nations would admit. But, as I have elsewhere remarked, nothing is so apt to mislead as these historical analogies, which often hold good to a certain point and then diverge into totally different results.

Adoption
of the de-
signation
of the
'Liberal'
party.

Lord Byron tells us in a poetical and beautiful passage that 'words are things,' and perhaps there is no instance of the truth of this sentiment more striking than the power which Party names have exercised in human affairs. The choice of these descriptive badges is really a matter of very great importance in the formation of a Party. Its adversaries are always anxious to fasten upon it some opprobrious appellation, Malignants or Regicides, Jacobins or Obstructives, while a more attractive surname has a great power in conciliating good-will, or in softening hostility. It is a great *desideratum* in the selection of a Party device, that it should be very comprehensive, embracing a variety of classes and shades of opinion, and that it should convey a favourable impression of the character of the Party. It is very politic to render it somewhat vague and indefinite, so that it should not shackle the operations of its leaders, or expose them to charges of inconsistency on any extreme course of policy which they think expedient to adopt.

Perhaps no Party name ever fulfilled all these conditions more than that of 'Liberal.' The word itself in its abstract and normal signification is descriptive of one of the most amiable and attractive of virtues. Mankind are often dupes to this idea, and take much time to discover that there is often a wide distinction between 'Liberality' and 'Liberalism.' Then it is singularly vague. No one exactly knows who are embraced within the ranks of Liberalism, or where the line of exclusion is drawn. Men of the most

contradictory principles, men opposed to each other upon the most vital questions of policy, equally claim to be Liberals. There are Constitutional Liberals, Moderate Liberals, Advanced Liberals, all advocating the most contradictory opinions, and yet all associated in one phalanx by this general term. I could borrow a great many illustrations from our own domestic factions, but I am engaged in examining rather the political condition of France and the Continent than of England, and I would confine my remarks therefore to the other side of the Channel.

It appears to me that the word 'Liberal' is meant to include every shade and degree of Democratic opinion, from the very slightest infusion of elective elements into our institutions to the wildest assertion of the 'Rights of Man.' The Liberal Party is the champion of progress, but in its idea of progress it requires that something which exists should be attacked, it aims at the subversion of some institution, or of some power, and the substitution of something else. It wholly ignores that progress which, in a healthy, orderly, and thriving community, is always insensibly advancing. This progress which, like the gradual development of the human frame from youth to manhood, is imperceptibly going on, is not by any means the kind of progress which the Liberal Party either understand or desire. It would confine them to much too passive a *rôle*. They consider that Government, that laws, that human nature itself require to be remodelled and reconstructed,

developed and directed. They are always aiming at changes more or less violent, and leaving nothing to the operations of nature. Progress supposes change, and with the Liberal programme it always means change in the Democratic direction. When they say mankind must advance, they mean mankind must become more democratic; they could not recognise any other movement as a Liberal one, they would stigmatise it as re-actionary or retrograde. This then appears to me to be the definition of Liberalism—constant attack upon some existing law or institution, this attack always springing from some more or less Democratic motive, and always directed to augment the power and influence of the Democratic principle. It may occasionally be very moderately democratic, but its action must always be inspired by a Democratic tendency.

There is another characteristic of Liberalism, that in action it has always a tendency to adopt the measures of its more extreme partisans, and coerce the more moderate members. We often hear that in private society Liberals express themselves with the utmost moderation and good sense, and appear to be anxious to confine their Liberalism within the very narrowest limits. They lend a ready ear to arguments in favour of this or that existing institution, and it seems as if they could safely be reckoned upon to retard the action and to regulate the progress of the Liberal machine. But we find that when that same machine is once set in motion all these moderate professions disappear, and these timid

disciples are dragged into the train of their more energetic and daring leaders.

The Government of Louis Philippe was inaugurated under the Liberal flag; in short, if my recollection serves me, its birth was co-temporary with the invention of the term, but it professed the mildest and most Conservative form of Liberalism. It was put forward with great promptitude and statesmanlike policy by the leaders of the Moderate Party, precisely with the object of barring the passage to ardent Republicans, and of carrying on under the new monarch the same Constitutional system which had been loyally administered by Louis XVIII. The friends of Constitutional Monarchy, whether Conservatives or Moderate Liberals, in this country were very confident of success, but I think that in France doubts and apprehensions were far more generally entertained. It soon became apparent that the strength of Republicanism was far greater than had been suspected. We in England imagined that with the 18 Brumaire it had died out, and that it was connected in men's memories with the Reign of Terror, and that more than thirty years of Monarchy under different Governments had altogether extinguished it. But shortly after the elevation of Louis Philippe to the throne it became evident that a powerful and active Republican party existed at all events in Paris. They looked upon the prompt accession of Louis Philippe as a sort of *coup d'état* of which they had been the victims, and they nourished a determined hostility against the

Hopes entertained of constitutional monarchy under Louis Philippe.

suspected of any latent hostility to it, but it was as a Constitutional King, governing through his Parliament and responsible Ministers, that he had accepted the Crown, and as a Constitutional King he had continued to reign. In compliance with the decision of the Chambers, he had accepted a great and democratic change in the Constitution in the abolition of the hereditary peerage. There was no prominent question before the country which could give a ground for an outbreak against the throne—nothing like the levy of ship-money in the days of our own Charles I., or the recent *ordonnances* of Prince Polignac. King Louis Philippe's ministers were men of ability, and attached to the principle of popular government. The occasion taken in the funeral of General Lamarque furnished no plausible pretext for a riot, much less for a revolt. General Lamarque had been an active and eloquent member of the Chamber of Deputies on the Liberal side, but his position was not a very conspicuous one. His military career under the Empire had never been illustrated by any distinguished services, or associated with any of the glories of the first Napoleon. Doubtless his military career had been respectable, but certainly not such as to entitle him to a funeral ovation. There was no dispute whatever about the manner of his interment, or any desire on the part of the authorities to interfere against his friends or any portion of the public in paying whatever tribute to his memory they might wish to offer. The funeral of this very secondary personage was clearly adopted

as the pretext, and a very shallow pretext, for a premeditated insurrection. That insurrection had been wholly unprovoked by any arbitrary or reactionary measures on the part of the Government. Its object was simply and undisguisedly an attack upon the Monarchical principle by the adherents to a Republic. It assumed a larger character of importance in consequence of the persons who originated it. It seems to have been encouraged by some of the most prominent among the leaders of the Opposition. It was manifest that this insurrection was not the mere fruit of some agitation for any particular measure, or the chance ebullition of some popular excitement; nor was it even an assault on the crown of the King—it was a direct systematic attempt to subvert the Constitutional throne and to substitute a Republic. The stake was Republicanism against Constitutional Monarchy.

The great importance of this event was little appreciated at the time, and least of all by the English public. Our own social and political revolution, after two years of contest, had ended in the passing of the Reform Bill, and the overthrow of those statesmen who, for forty years, had directed the policy of this country. This engrossing struggle occupied the whole public mind, and left us little leisure to watch with minute attention those transactions of foreign states. Popular sympathy had entirely associated itself with the rising in Paris in July 1830. We were not prepared altogether to reverse the whole current of our feelings on the occasion of an outbreak, the causes of

which were not very intelligible to the English public. Non-interference was a fundamental article of the new political creed, and it conveyed an indirect condemnation of all the anti-revolutionary policy of Pitt and his successors. The whole scope and meaning of this great demonstration of Republicanism in Paris was not comprehended on this side of the Channel. It was regarded as a mere outbreak of the hot spirits of the lower classes of Paris, a sort of second wave occasioned by the excitement of the previous conflict of July 1830, and which having been so vigorously repressed by the energy of the French Government, left the Constitutional throne of King Louis Philippe far stronger than it found it. We read the lesson which was then given to us with far other eyes now by the light which subsequent events have thrown upon it. We perceive that it was a revival of the great Revolutionary struggle of 1789, which has continued to desolate France ever since.

Results of
the con-
flicts be-
tween the
military
forces and
the armed
popula-
tions of
Paris and
Brussels.

It will be very necessary to note the circumstances of the two conflicts in 1830 and 1832, and also the corresponding one at Brussels in September 1830, as these occurrences, exclusive of their immediate results, which were very important, exercised a strong influence over the course of events in succeeding years. We must take as our point of departure this fact, which I have already noticed, that in all political changes France has hitherto, with one or two exceptions, blindly and implicitly followed the lead of the metropolis. A Revolution consum-

mated at Paris, by whatever means, is accepted by the rest of France as a *fait accompli*. The rule of Paris over the provinces, whether Paris is Republican, Napoleonic, or Orleanist, Constitutional or Absolute, is submitted to without question, without a murmur. A civil war in France, with the exception of the contest in the remote province of La-Vendée, has never been waged during the whole history of that country from the year 1789 downwards. Paris has always given the law to France as absolutely as if she were an individual sovereign, as despotically as ever the Czar of Russia or the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid could have done. If therefore, by any means, by a bold surprise, by a street riot, or by a *coup d'état*, a revolution is effected in Paris, all France follows its lead with tame acquiescence. This is the first proposition which I venture to lay down; and my second is, that the victories over the reigning governments of the country, supported by military force, which were achieved at Paris in July 1830 and in the September of the same year at Brussels, opened a new road to the fiery spirits of Democratic Revolution. Hitherto the ascendancy of disciplined troops over street mobs had been a recognised fact. Instances to the contrary were rare, and generally of a local character. They had not been overlooked by the military sagacity of the first Napoleon, who in an interesting letter to Marshal Suchet, on the occasion of the siege of Saragossa, remarks that instances of the successful defence of a town by an armed population against regular troops

were not wanting. He particularly cited the discomfiture of the English troops under General Whitelock, at Buenos Ayres. But such cases were very infrequent, and generally on a comparatively small scale, and owing to some incidental circumstances. The overthrow of a dynasty, the Revolution of an Empire by the improvised rising of the whole population of a great city against a regular army was a novelty in the history of European warfare. Through all the storms of the first French Revolution, street conflicts in Paris appear to have been insignificant, the mob and the National Guard seem to have been always triumphant. Even the fall of Robespierre was prefaced by no serious conflict, and the 13 Vendémiaire, on which Napoleon first appeared on the scene, was, as I have already observed, a complete triumph to the Government of the day, and the regular army which took part in it. The capture of Lyons in October 1793 was a military operation indeed, but the city was reduced by a regular army by the orders of the Convention, then the reigning Government. In the first French Revolution the mobs, always ready, at the command of the Jacobins, to pour out from the Faubourg St.-Antoine, were an instrument of terror in the hands of the Convention, but met with no organised or armed resistance in any quarter. The 'Glorious Three Days,' as they are called, of July 1830, offered the first example, in a great European crisis, of a Revolution effected by the sudden outbreak of an armed population against a regular military force.

This event has powerfully influenced the subsequent history of France and of Europe; and it is not uninteresting at this distance of time, to mark both the immediate causes and the results which have flowed from it. In the first place the Government of Prince de Polignac was wholly unprepared for so vital a struggle. It rashly undervalued its opponents; no pains were taken to strengthen the military force in and about Paris, no preparation was made to provision the troops in the event of any protracted operations. A large military force at Rambouillet was never called into action at all. The National Guards, a short time before, had been disbanded by Charles X., but had not been disarmed, and were quite ready to make common cause with the insurgents. Many of the troops were disaffected, and although the *Garde Royale* stood firm to their colours, a large number of desertions took place in some of the regiments of the line. Anything more ill-contrived or more slovenly than the military operations could not be conceived. A very profound and interesting observation was made with regard to this Revolution, and to that in February 1848, which overthrew King Louis Philippe by General Cavaignac. It was made in the course of an address to the Assembly, after the sanguinary conflict of June 1848, in which the army finally subdued that most desperate revolt of the Red Republicans. He observed, ‘without wishing to enter upon the more remote causes of these two events, I may remark that the proximate cause which led to the overthrow and

expulsion of the two dynasties of Charles X. and Louis XVIII. were that the troops were employed merely as a police under the orders of the civil power. They were not directed as a military force, or according to the principles of military science.'

In pursuing our investigation into the causes which led to these important successes of the Paris population over regular military forces, we must consider both the composition of that population and the great facilities afforded by the narrow streets and lofty houses of Paris to an armed defence. The lower classes of the inhabitants of Paris have been almost all more or less habituated to the use of arms, and to some sort of military training. The conscription, at the end of five years' service, discharges a great number of soldiers who have been thoroughly disciplined; among these are many who, having served as non-commissioned officers, are fully capable of commanding small bodies. In addition to this large number of discharged soldiers, are to be counted men who have at different times served in the National Guard, and of that portion of the National Guards who in these contests have passed over to the side of the insurgents. To these may be added a large number of refugee Poles and other foreigners who had been driven out of their own countries at the termination of some civil war.

We must also recollect that the savage leaders of these insurrections had not the least scruple in pressing the neutral part of the population into the service, or in enforcing obedience by a rough-and-

ready discipline. I remember a rather amusing conversation which I once held with the mistress of a small music shop in the Passage des Panoramas on a visit which I made to Paris after the street conflicts of 1848. She was deploring the interruption to commerce which these disorders had occasioned; and I, wishing to say something civil upon a point on which all French people, male and female, are open to compliment, remarked upon the extraordinary valour which the population of Paris displayed in these encounters. '*Oh monsieur,*' she replied, '*cela n'a rien de si étonnant, car, voyez-vous, les chefs ne se mettent jamais en avant; ils poussent le peuple en avant, et puis, ils les piquent par derrière avec leurs baïonnettes, de sorte qu'il n'y a plus moyen de reculer.*' *

In addition to the natural facilities for defence afforded by the narrow streets and lofty houses, are to be counted the large square paving stones with which they are everywhere paved, and which afford an excellent material for an improvised fortification. I do not know when these formidable defences were first resorted to. I cannot recall to memory any instance previous to July 1830, though, I daresay, they may have been used in former times.

The temper and character of the excitable population of this great city, particularly of those parts inhabited by the lower classes, is an important con-

* 'Oh, sir,' replied she, 'there is nothing so wonderful in it, because, do you see, the chiefs never put themselves in front, they thrust the people forward, and then they prick them with their bayonets from behind, so that they have no longer any means of backing out.'

sideration in estimating the causes of these great social convulsions. From the earliest days of the revolutionary epoch the inhabitants of the Faubourg St.-Antoine, and the other quarters tenanted by the working population, had played a conspicuous part in the history of revolution. They were among the foremost actors in that first scene, the taking of the Bastille; they composed the mob who compelled Louis XVI. and his Queen to leave Versailles, and take up their residence in Paris; they insulted and degraded the King in the tumult of June 1792; they surrounded the carts which led the victims to the guillotine. Nor were the men the only actors in these scenes; women always played a conspicuous part, and often even surpassed their male associates in cruelty and ferocity.

These peculiar characteristics have become hereditary among them; and we find, on studying the accounts of later events down to the most recent times, that neither in military aptitude, or in desperate courage, or in cruelty and barbarity, have the men and women in June 1848, or in the war of the Commune last year, at all declined in those attributes of their forefathers. The traditions of the past still inspire them. They exult in the retrospect of the bloody triumphs of '*sans-culottism*' with which history abounds. Among many of them the Reign of Terror is a period of glory, and Robespierre is worshipped as a martyr to the cause of the people. In 1848 the clubs in Paris were called after his name; and the guillotine, under the nickname of

'Marianne,' was the theme of praise in the mouths of demagogues who harangued in the clubs.

I do not in the least exaggerate the pictures I am drawing. It is only necessary to recur to the narratives of June 1848, and of the recent siege of the Commune, to prove that the fiercest fanaticism of Jacobinism has lost none of its intensity in our later days; and what renders the social gangrene still more dangerous is, that these men and women are all inspired with a belief in their own insane doctrines; they are firmly convinced that they are the victims of the unjust institutions which have sprung out of an erroneous civilisation. They bring into the conflict none of that craven feeling which the conscious sense of a bad cause inspires, but rather the furious zeal of the disciples of some dark superstition, like the early Mahometans, who propagated their opinions with fire and sword.

Now the results of all these circumstances are, that in Paris there exists a strong fortress garrisoned by a fierce army, ever ready to take the field, as their ancestors did in the last century against all the institutions of existing civilisation. They are not a mere blind rabble, but are furnished with a keen intelligence, quite capable to use to the best advantage, and without a grain of scruple, all the vast powers which this vantage-ground of Paris puts into their hands.

It was this revolutionary power which displayed all its dangerous strength in June 1832. It had no other justification or object but its hatred to Mon-

archy, and its determination to overturn the throne of King Louis Philippe. The startling fact on this occasion was, that it was within an ace of entirely accomplishing its object. The battle was severe and lasted two days, and, on the night of the first, the success of the insurgents seemed almost certain. It required 60,000 regular troops, aided by about 10,000 National Guards of the *banlieue*, and commanded by Marshal Soult, one of the ablest of all Napoleon's great generals, to crush this furious outbreak of revolution. The danger had been imminent, but its magnitude was scarcely estimated at the time nor until long after. People at a distance, and particularly the English public, had satisfied themselves that the French would steer a perfectly wise and moderate course, defending their liberties on the one hand, and repressing all attempts at revolutionary anarchy on the other. They had satisfied themselves that the cause of progress, as they called it, would proceed in a uniform direction, and would not be interrupted or deflected from its straight, onward course, either by monarchical attempts or revolutionary violence. Events have proved how utterly mistaken were these anticipations. Each of these opposite influences has in turn predominated in the course of the last forty years; and if we were now rash enough to hazard a prophecy for the future it would be, that there no longer exist in France the materials to form or to maintain that Constitutional Monarchy which the Optimists of 1832 imagined to have been secured.

The history of the last forty years exhibits Paris

as a sort of citadel of Ultra-Democracy and Red Republicanism. The Revolutionary hordes lie esconced in Belleville, the Faubourg St.-Antoine, and La Villette, nourishing their imaginations, or what they conceive to be their reason, with all the old traditional principles of Jacobinism. They are inspired and directed by keen and sagacious spirits well versed in the science and strategy of revolt. At an hour's march from their strongholds is located the seat of power with all the offices and machinery of its highly centralised government. Let a favourable opportunity, an unpopular act of the Government, a defeat, a reverse, or a moment of irresolution, relax its power, or give a pretext to these ever-watchful foes to all law or authority, and they descend like an avalanche upon the civilised and refined inhabitants of the Chaussée-d'Antin and the Faubourg St.-Germain. They storm all the seats of Government, they suppress the Chambers, the National Assembly, or whatever name at the time may be borne by the representatives of the nation. They drive all the late possessors of government before them. In twenty-four hours a monarchy, a dynasty, or a republic is swept away, a provisional government is installed, couriers and telegraphic despatches are sent to the departments, and in a week all France has passed under a new *régime*. If defeated by the promptitude and resolution of the Government, probably at a vast expense of blood and destruction of property, they retire into their fastnesses, where, during some fifteen or twenty years, they concoct new theories of im-

practicable utopias, and burst out again, at a convenient season to make a fresh onslaught upon civilisation. I will confidently appeal to the history of the last forty years to prove this to be a correct summary of events in Paris and in France. At each succeeding eruption there are always those here and elsewhere to defend, or at least to extenuate, the acts of the Revolutionists. It is always argued that they have been urged onward by some strong provocation; and writers in our own comfortable metropolis are ever anxious to throw upon the *bourgeoisie*, the Rue de la Paix, the Rue St.-Honoré, or the Boulevards, the reproach of not having at once boldly confronted and put down these enemies of public order. We may take it as a received and demonstrated fact, that the quiet and peaceable inhabitants of Paris, the cultivated and fine portions of Paris, the idle seekers of pleasure, or the industrious business-pursuing citizens, will never be a match for these organised forces of Revolution. Nothing but a military force with its auxiliaries of artillery can cope with them, and no regular Government established in France can possibly neglect to provide this only means of stability and safety.

Imitation
of France
by the
newly-
formed
Liberal
Govern-
ments of
the Conti-
nent.

It has been a great misfortune to Continental Europe, that during the last eighty years, when such a restless desire for experiments in Constitutions has pervaded almost all the nations which compose it, they have always followed France as their guide and instructress, although the efforts of France to frame a social edifice combining liberty, order, and security,

have been constantly failures. Continental nations have never turned their attention to England, or endeavoured to understand the principles of our Constitution, although we alone have solved the problem, which they have all been endeavouring to realise. Perhaps this may be attributable to the more intimate manner in which France has always mixed up in familiar life with the other nations of Europe, to the general diffusion of her language, and to the lead which, since the days of Louis XIV., she has taken in the social life of the Continent. England, insulated in position, had worked out her own distinct national history, not in the least understood by Continental Europe. Whatever may have been the cause, the effect is certain. France has always been, in later times, adopted as the model which Continental Reformers have imitated. They have always followed, with more or less modification, the pernicious example of 1789. They have always discarded the fundamental principle of the English Constitution—a mixed Government, in which the Monarchical is coupled with the two other great elements of Aristocracy and Democracy, in which must always be found the constituents of any society in an advanced state of civilisation. Neither of these three is absolutely predominant. They have generally admitted some form of Monarchy, but they had banished all Aristocracy from their institutions, and have considered its influence as totally inconsistent with the spirit of modern Liberalism. They have always refused to perceive that Monarchy and Democracy—or,

Want of
the Aris-
tocratic
element
everywhere
fatal to
their per-
manence.

as they described it in the early part of Louis Philippe's reign, a Monarchy surrounded by Republican institutions—never can endure when the cement to assimilate them is absent.

Spain from
the death
of Ferdi-
nand VII.

The Revolution of July 1830 was the signal of Liberalism in many parts of Europe. In Spain, on the death of Ferdinand VII., an attempt was made to convert the absolute Government of that country into a Representative Monarchy. The claims of the two pretenders to the throne were subordinate to this main issue. The rights of his daughter Queen Isabella were founded upon the ancient law of Spain, which, like our own, admitted females to the succession. Don Carlos' pretensions were founded upon the Salic Law, which was introduced by the Bourbons when Philip V. succeeded. Which of these titles was the best was itself purely a matter for Spain to decide. Great importance was given to the question by the partisans of Queen Isabella and her mother Christina adopting the cause of Representative institutions, while Don Carlos and his adherents espoused that of the Absolute Monarchy. The civil war which ensued was of several years' duration, and the issue more than once doubtful. It was terminated in 1839, very much by the intervention of our naval forces and the marines of the fleet, greatly against that principle of non-interference which had been so loudly proclaimed by the Whig Government.

I have always thought that Spain, at that period, afforded a theatre very well adapted for the ex-

periment of a mixed government on the English system. The Spanish nation was not generally under the influence of strong Democratic opinions. They were attached to their ancient usages, and they possessed an old and noble aristocracy, still in possession of extensive landed estates. The raw material was not wanting, but no one seemed ever for one moment to think of making use of it. The Democratic constitution of 1812 was revived ; with what result we have now the experience of thirty years to show us. Spain has been the scene of endless disturbances and revolutions. One general after another has risen to power, and has governed the country really in a despotic spirit and by military force, under the forms of the popular Assembly. There never has been any real constitutional freedom in the gleams of revived prosperity which have occasionally illumined the dreary history of this period, but have flowed from the vigorous and arbitrary rule of Narvaez and O'Donnell. It has ended in the expulsion of the dynasty. It was Lord Palmerston's creation as a Liberal Government, but the experience of thirty years has demonstrated that attempt to have been a failure. The history of that whole period is the record of different administrations raised to power by what the Spaniards call a *pronunciamento* of the army. At the death of O'Donnell the Government seemed to have fallen into absolute confusion. No master mind was there to grasp the reins, and the constitutional throne of Queen Isabella shared the fate of that of Louis Philippe. As on previous

occasions a military adventurer, who had been twice exiled, got possession of the army, and established a military dictatorship which lasted for two years. His plan of campaign, for it was rather a campaign than a government, was somewhat novel, and consisted in the utilisation of the new invention of railways, which by this time had been tolerably well established throughout the peninsula. He had few and small garrisons in the provinces, but he held a large military force concentrated in Madrid, which he was ready to direct with great rapidity upon any point in which insurrection manifested itself. An overwhelming military force brought to bear at once upon the point crushed the revolt, and, that object attained, was withdrawn to the centre of Madrid as speedily as it had been sent forth.

By this strategy Prim seems to have succeeded in maintaining his Provisional Government for a greater period than might have been anticipated. He acted with some sagacity and moderation in declining the temptation of converting himself into a Spanish Cromwell or Napoleon, and in procuring the election of a foreign prince to the throne, he probably calculated upon continuing to rule the country as the minister of the young King; but his assassination has replunged the country into confusion and uncertainty. King Amadeus has shown considerable firmness and ability in the difficult position in which he is placed. But no one can feel the slightest security in the permanence of his government in the midst of the hostile factions by which he is encom-

passed. One prediction we may venture to hazard, which is, if he does maintain himself it must be by securing the support of the army and becoming a military dictator.

If we turn to another and an earlier experiment of Constitutional Monarchy we find the result has been still more disastrous. The revolt of the Greeks against the Turkish rule in 1821 intoxicated the whole Liberal party in Europe with the visions of national regeneration which should place Greeks in the foremost rank of European nations. We were again to see philosophers like Socrates and Plato, lawgivers like Solon and Lycurgus, leaders like Miltiades, Themistocles and Epaminondas, orators like Demosthenes, historians on a par with Herodotus and Thucydides, and poets like Homer. Greece, which was the cradle of democracy, was again to give to the world the revival of all its ancient intellectual greatness. All Plutarch was to be resuscitated, and his heroes were to walk forth from his pages to galvanise the world with the electric fire of Greek genius which had been so long dormant.

Greece
from the
revolt
against the
Turks in
1821.

Half a century has scarcely sufficed to dissipate these dreams. The independence of the new State was established by the aid of the three great powers of England, France, and Russia. It was formally received under this illustrious and powerful patronage into the comity of European nations. It was provided with a sovereign of royal though foreign stock, and it was launched with a representative Constitution with which to exhibit to the world the wonders

to be effected by self-government in raising a nation which had been crushed for centuries. This experiment has not been successful. The throne of King Otho, though mouldered and rotted away under the corruption with which it was surrounded, was finally overturned by one of those popular insurrections which seem the uniform fate of Constitutional Monarchies on the Continent. Greece has not attained one of the benefits of good government. The state of society there appears to be incurably rotten. The country seems to be divided between brigands, who realise the novels of *Fra Diavolo*, *Rinaldo* and *Rinaldini*, and their patrons or confederates who rule in the cabinet. Greece seems to be a focus of intrigue, and a centre of armed propaganda against the Turkish Government.

There is a scene in Offenbach's charming opera of '*Les Brigands*,' which might really seem to have been borrowed from some passage in modern Greek history. A band of robbers having seized upon the place bargain for a large ransom, which is promised them. The treasurer of the Government is sent for to confer with the chief of the brigands as to the payment. A most amusing scene takes place between the treasurer and the bandit; the latter presses his demand at first with great urbanity, but at last with furious rage, when it is elicited from the treasurer that it is quite impossible for him to meet the demands of the robbers as he has previously stolen all the money himself. The audience is in fits of laughter at the humorous acting of these two

personages, while they thought that the conception was rather too extravagant even for burlesque. It seems, however, that it might find a real parallel at Athens.

So far from the establishment of Greek independence having led to any increase of prosperity in the country, it is sunk into a ferocious barbarism. Neither life nor property are safe. Venality appears to pervade every department of the State. It is worthy of remark that while such is the lamentable condition of Greece proper, after fifty years of self-government and representative institutions, the Greeks established at Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, London, and Liverpool are among the most enterprising and successful of commercial speculators. They have obtained possession of almost all the trade of the Levant; and while Greece proper, with its miserable institutions, is immersed in poverty, the Greeks under foreign rule are enriching themselves in the countries in which they are located.

The most recent and altogether the most promising attempt to engraft representative institutions and Constitutional Monarchy upon an old State in the south of Europe is that of Italy. The Italians had many advantages over Spain and Greece. Civilisation and intelligence were far more generally diffused. Her intercourse with the northern nations of Europe was frequent and intimate. They were better acquainted with the state of society and the public mind, not only of France but of England than perhaps any other continental State. They had

the great advantage in possessing in Count Cavour one really great man, one of the leading minds of the nineteenth century. They have been eminently fortunate in obtaining the great prizes of their national ambition, not by their own unassisted efforts, but by the aid of circumstances in the co-operation of other nations. In the House of Savoy they found a royal race endowed with many high qualities, possessing courage, public spirit, and no inconsiderable sagacity. France not exactly intending to do so, much helped them to achieve their great dream of a United Italy, and Prussia not intending it at all completed the work by pressing so hard upon Austria in the north as to force her to relax her grasp of Venice and the Quadrilateral, while the reverses of the French arms have enabled them to complete their cherished object of Italian unity by the occupation of Rome.

They have the great advantage, if they know how to use it, of an aristocratic element in their social state, which has not been crushed by Jacobinism. Great historic families still exist in Rome, Naples, and the Milanese, and they are still in possession of considerable landed estates. If the Italians can appreciate the great political truth, that political liberty cannot possibly co-exist with equality, but must be founded upon the recognition of those great divisions upon which all advanced civilisation must be based, it is possible that they may rear an edifice having some resemblance to the British Constitution. Hitherto it was to be feared that they were rather

treading in the footsteps of French democracy, which will certainly end in similar failure.

The position of King Louis Philippe was altogether changed by the early events of his reign—the abolition of the hereditary peerage, and the formidable insurrection at the funeral of General Lamarque. The friends of moderate constitutional monarchy, based upon the English model, had anticipated from his advent to the throne a return to those principles which had given birth to the charter and guided the policy of Louis XVIII. They knew that time and repose were essential to the establishment of any real liberty in France, and that it was above all things necessary that the door of revolution should be definitively closed. But all the hopes of this party were rudely dispersed by the storms which inaugurated the commencement of his reign. Instead of being accepted as the constitutional king, defending the liberties of the nation against the absolutism of Prince de Polignac, he was at once placed as the defender of a monarchy against republicanism and revolution. He was to act the part of the drama which Louis XVI. had acted and failed, which Charles X. had acted and failed. To do full justice to King Louis Philippe it was not the least by his own fault that this part was forced upon him. He was not, like his predecessors, either secretly hostile to or openly contending against the institutions of a limited constitutional monarchy. He appears to have accepted the crown with its conditions and limitations with perfect good faith, and never during his reign to have sought to evade them.

Change in the position of King Louis Philippe after the abolition of the hereditary peerage, and the insurrection at the funeral of General Lamarque.

But from this time his whole reign was a struggle against the revolutionary spirit, which was incessantly seeking to undermine and to subvert his dynasty. The eighteen years of his reign were but one long struggle against the spirit of Revolution. The tide of democracy was always rising. It will be difficult on looking back to cast upon the monarch the blame of any particular act or of any course of policy by which he had deserved the catastrophe which closed his reign. The wish of Europe was for peace, and he gave them peace. The condition of it was responsible government through ministers, and he always acquiesced in the will of the majority, and governed through his Chambers. He never was guilty of any acts of arbitrary power exceeding the provisions of the law. It may be true that acting through his ministers, and with the support of a majority in the Chambers, he may have occasionally had resort to measures of somewhat rigorous repression both against the extreme license of the press and the violence of factions, but he never exceeded the authority of law or had recourse to steps of a purely arbitrary character. His whole policy, as against the more violent liberal factions, was a defensive one, but no government can possibly maintain a purely defensive attitude against incessant and unscrupulous assaults.

It is often asserted that the corruption and venality of official personages, and of all the agents of government, discredited them with the people, and was the cause of their fall. Such loose and

general charges are always made against every government in turn by the organs of democracy. Many of the public men in France appear at this time to have been personally governed by the highest and most honourable motives, and to have been animated by a sincere belief in the soundness of their own political principles. It is, nevertheless, very certain that in a country which has been so often a prey to anarchy, and in which, during the last eighty years, successive storms of democratic revolution have swept over the land, the whole tone of public morality has been lowered, and strict honour or rigid integrity in dealing with public money has become a somewhat exceptional virtue. We must remember that each revolutionary wave throws up to the surface, and places in offices of trust political adventurers of every shade and description—men wholly unaccustomed to responsibility, and considering the public service as a scrambling for power and for profit. It would be very extraordinary if the same purity of principle, or the same correctness in administration prevails, as may be found in old countries where the machine of government has long been worked under the superintendence of a class raised by position above the temptations which naturally assail these troops of adventurers, who are often needy and desperate men raised out of obscurity in the process of these social convulsions. Facts confirm the justice of these anticipations. Nothing could exceed the corruption and profligacy of the days of the Directory, and even

the stern rule of the first Napoleon had a difficult task in opposing the flood of venality which that disastrous epoch had let loose upon France. It does not appear that these evils of democratic government are at all confined to France. I have already adverted to the state of Greece, and if we may trust the revelations which have lately been made in the United States as to the proceedings of the Tammany Ring and the management of the Erie Canal, we may draw the conclusion that Democratic rule is tainted with the same vices on the other side of the Atlantic.

Immediate
causes of
the fall of
the Orleans
dynasty.

It is probable that the administration of King Louis Philippe in these respects was neither worse nor better than that of other governments which have administered affairs in France of later years. An architect cannot construct an edifice except from the materials at his command, and the government of Louis Philippe, like any other government in France, could only choose from the crowd of public men who all, more or less, had been educated in the same school. The case of M. Teste produced an unfavourable impression in the later period of Louis Philippe's reign, but there seems no reason to suppose that the same practices were general among the higher class of officials in the French government.

The conclusion at which any impartial student of modern history will arrive is, that the year 1830 marks a fresh starting-point from which Revolution again began to assail all existing forms of government, and the whole framework of social order. It

was very convenient for the disciples of this school to cloak the real nature of the movement under a variety of specious phrases—the ‘Progress of the Age,’ the ‘Advance of Civilisation,’ the ‘Influence of Liberal ideas,’ all these are sounding phrases which have led astray not only the masses to whom they were addressed, but those who taught them. A false faith can never be propagated by those who disbelieve in it themselves. It must have its enthusiasts, its missionaries, and its martyrs. Joe Smith probably believed that he was appointed by Heaven to establish a new religion; Mr. Home very likely persuades himself that he is a medium between embodied and disembodied spirits; and Messrs. Bright and Cobden, within a few years of the breaking out of the Russian and Italian Wars, of the American civil contest, the campaign of Sadowa, and the desolating struggle between France and Germany, had thoroughly convinced themselves that war was an anachronism, and that mankind had become too wise to quarrel and too peaceable to fight.

The only safe guide to the student in politics to follow is experience, and it is by the light of the most recent experience that we are invited to study the lessons which Revolution has taught us. That modern theory of Revolution originated in France. It is in France that it has passed through its successive stages; it is in France that it has received its most recent developments; and it is in France, amidst the ruined monuments of its proud metropolis that the fires of the Commune best enable us

to read its results. When we review the eighteen years of King Louis Philippe's reign we find that they were one long conspiracy on the part of the leaders of the popular party against his dynasty. Nowhere does there seem to have been any attachment either to his person or to that Constitutional Monarchy which was the principle of his government. The Legitimists, separated from him by so slight a shade of real political principle, held aloof in proud and sullen discontent. The members of the Extreme Liberal Party, who had contributed so much to the overthrow of Charles X., and his own elevation to the throne, were exasperated at having been put aside in the distribution of power. The strength of the Imperialists was not known or suspected even by themselves. All the vitality of public life was more than ever confined to Paris; it breathed through the ranks of the Opposition in the Chamber of Deputies and the organs of the Press. The Opposition were divided into the Dynastic members, and those who secretly or openly professed Republican principles. It would be very difficult to range these two classes in two distinct bodies; we really have no means of guessing who were the adherents to a Constitutional Throne, although antagonists of the Ministry, and who were opposed equally to both, and bent upon repeating the experiment of a Republic. We may lay down one position as a fundamental action in all such cases—that the more extreme party will eventually triumph over the more moderate, either crushing its members or absorbing them into its

own ranks. We hear no more of the Dynastic opposition in the last struggles of the Orleans dynasty, but all readily doffed the livery of a Republic.

A review of this period would be very incomplete if it omitted to notice the vast additional influence and extraordinary development of the periodical press. This mighty organ of modern political power had already attained large proportions, but they were greatly augmented during the reign of the Citizen King. There were many circumstances which gave to this branch of literature a degree of political weight and importance greatly surpassing that it possessed in any other country, at least in Europe. Our own newspaper press was certainly no whit inferior to that of France, either in the ability of its writers or in the extent and accuracy of the information it supplied, but its influence, though very great, was not so overwhelming as that exercised in France. The reason is that in the older and more stable constitution of English society there are other and independent influences which regulate and balance it. These influences pervade society and are to be discerned in the greater independence of thought and judgment exercised in all the higher and more educated classes of the community. The courts of law and the legal profession generally have attained an authority over the opinions of the community far exceeding that exercised by the French tribunals. Both Houses of Parliament, particularly the House of Lords, have an independence of thought and freedom of will which will not submit

Influence
of the
newspaper
press.

to the dictation of a newspaper press. The reading portion of the British public who are not altogether confined to the newspapers, but whose acquaintance with literature is of a more general character, greatly exceeds in number that of the French. But a power exercised by familiarity with literature of a more permanent and solid character operates in two ways, first of all upon the minds of the reading public who draw a great portion of their ideas from other sources, and who thus exercise an independent criticism upon the arguments and conclusions in the newspaper press. The other controlling influence is that exercised upon the press itself, who write under a graver sense of responsibility than when addressing the comparatively ignorant and excitable population of France. All these checks are absent, or comparatively so, in France. To this we may add the fact that the profession of a contributor to the newspapers is the easiest in which to embark of any which exist. The contributor to a newspaper requires no capital, no University degree, no license, no permission from any one; if he can only write ably he can at once command attention, consideration, and profit. The popular contributor to a successful journal in Paris may live in an agreeable and intellectual society, stimulated by the excitement of political contest, he may enjoy all the luxuries of a bachelor's life in Paris, he may breakfast and dine at his favourite restaurant, enjoy his promenade in the day, and his 'spectacle' in the evening, while he is day by day and inch by inch undermining not merely a Ministry,

but a Dynasty. He renders himself gradually a person of political importance and may have a fair chance at the next Revolution of becoming a member of the Provisional Government.

If we read the most recent history of France, we shall find that the Parisian newspapers each form a staff of political partisans, who do not at all confine the sphere of their political activity to literary contributions alone. They are the organs through whom, in times of popular excitement, Revolutions are effected, and from whose ranks Ministers are selected. The 'Journal des Débats,' the 'Constitutionnel,' the 'National,' the 'Réform,' and the 'Presse,' have all, in turn, played a prominent part in the different crises which have agitated Paris during the last forty years. Although many of these journals have advocated moderate counsels, and upheld the cause of order with ability and effect, it is, nevertheless, certain that a great proportion of their influence has been exerted in the promotion of political change; and that upon the whole 'Revolution,' using the word in the French acceptation of the embodiment of the Revolutionary spirit, has found, in the periodical press, its most powerful auxiliary. It is inevitable that such should be the case. Men, for the most part young and ardent, and hanging loosely upon a society in itself destitute of all cohesion, will naturally adopt the most stimulating and exciting style of writing. They are prompted to it by considerations of profit and self-interest, since these are most likely to obtain for them popularity; and

they are farther actuated by ambition, since the cause they adopt is by far the most likely to afford them openings for advancement and distinction. We may lay down as an incontestable fact that the press has been during the whole period of later years a Revolutionary force in France, acting with such formidable power that no constituted government is strong enough to withstand its systematic attacks.

Anticipations entertained in the course of Louis Philippe's reign proved to be totally erroneous.

The reign of King Louis Philippe was a portion of the Revolutionary history of France inviting the closest and most serious consideration. It is in a careful retrospective analysis of this period that we shall discover the secret springs which have moved that volcanic soil with so many convulsions. The partisans of Revolution have a great dislike to these retrospective reviews. It is alike their interest and inclination to hurry onward without casting a backward glance. They cling to the doctrine of *faits accomplis*, a change once completed, a victory over some existing institution or some established principle once achieved; they do not allow their followers to ask the question whether it has been an advantage gained, or whether evil and not good has been the consequence. They assume the change must be beneficial. They like to fix their feet firmly upon the step in the ladder to which they have climbed, and to prepare for another advance. Nothing is more repugnant to them than to challenge them on the old ground or to dispute the principles upon which they have acted. They stigmatise such inquiries as

unprofitable and reactionary. I think for their own objects they are right. But if the search after truth is the principal aim of the political philosopher, or its establishment the ultimate goal of his inquiries, they are then grievously wrong in thus shutting out all examination of the past.

We must always bear in mind that political science, like every other science, is to be studied by two methods. The one by abstract reasoning, the other by the results of experiment. Abstract reasoning in political questions is exceedingly deceptive and fallacious. Its bases cannot be fixed with sufficient precision to enable any certain conclusions to be drawn from them. But if we pursue the second method of inquiry, that of testing the results of experiments by the light of past experience, we must then turn constantly backwards, carefully review our previous steps, and judge their tendency whether for good or for evil from our present point of view. It is from this point that I would invite my readers to contemplate the history of the eighteen years preceding 1848. Let us endeavour to dismiss from our minds all foregone conclusions, and calmly to ask ourselves what were the received opinions on which men founded their judgment and statesmen shaped their policy during that important period, and how far such opinions have received confirmation by subsequent experience.

If those amongst us who are old enough to do so can carry their thoughts back to the eighteen years of Louis Philippe's reign I think they must acknow-

ledge that almost all the opinions they then entertained, and the cotemporary judgment which they formed, have been falsified by the event. This does not alone apply to those sanguine and visionary politicians with whom the future is always decked in roseate colours, and with whom every movement of society is an advance towards human perfectibility. I refer to the great body of sober, well-educated, thinking people, whether in England or in France. The prevalent view then of this period was that the principles of Constitutional Government and responsible Parliamentary Government had been more firmly established by the failure of the attempt to revive Absolute Monarchy under the elder Bourbons, and by the elevation of King Louis Philippe to the throne. There could be no doubt of the adhesion of this sovereign to the principles of constitutional and limited monarchy. He was, at the same time, of the blood-royal of France, and the nearest hereditary successor to the throne, failing the almost worn-out line of the elder Bourbons, and might reasonably look forward to secure, either immediately or eventually, the support of the Legitimist party. His policy was peaceful and not likely to provoke the hostility of neighbouring Powers, but calculated to insure the permanence of that European tranquillity which was in itself the natural ally of internal order. His own abilities and talent for government were considerable. He was disposed to moderation, no way arbitrary or despotic in his temper, and intimately acquainted with the character and history

of his times. In M. Casimir-Perier and M. Guizot he possessed very able and honest ministers, and he had a numerous family of promising sons, to whom the country might reasonably look forward as giving permanence to the form of government he represented. Although the abolition of the hereditary peerage was in the minds of reflecting men a disquieting symptom, yet the suppression of the formidable revolt at General Lamarque's funeral, in June 1832, seemed rather to give stability to his throne, and it was generally hoped that the progress of years would gradually consolidate those institutions which appeared, on the whole, best calculated to give to France liberty and repose. I think, upon the whole, these expectations were strengthened in this country by the constant and almost involuntary parallel they were unconsciously drawing between their history and our own. In the overthrow of Charles X. and the Polignac ministry they found a resemblance to the expulsion of James II., and in the substitution of the line of Louis Philippe they found a copy of our own adoption, first of King William and afterwards of the Brunswick line, which had been the foundation of the liberties and greatness of England. As I have observed before, these parallels are treacherous and misleading, and we have learned subsequently how little these analogies are to be trusted, and how widely France has diverged from the road so wisely and happily pursued by England. We of the present generation, even the oldest amongst us, had in

England long been accustomed to regard the outbreak of the first French Revolution, with its wild enthusiasm, with its impossible theories and visionary hopes at the commencement, with its subsequent insanity, and its long record of crimes and horrors, as a period which had utterly passed by. We regarded it in much the same temper of mind as we looked back upon the proscriptions of Sylla or the cruelties of Nero, as belonging entirely to another epoch in the history of the world. The matchless eloquence and profound political philosophy of Burke were only read by the student of history, and by him even when he agreed to their principles and admired their unequalled literary merit, yet with no idea they could have an application to modern times. Such was the tone of opinion, even of the moderate Conservative politicians, while our Liberals sympathised more and more warmly with the French Opposition leaders—MM. Odillon-Barrot, Garnier-Pagès, Arago, and their supporters—but without suspecting that their policy aimed not at the struggle of constitutional opposition, but at the overthrow of a dynasty and the establishment of a republic.

Fresh outbreak of revolutionary violence quite unforeseen by the Liberal party in England.

Even our most advanced Liberals in England, those who profess themselves most strongly the disciples of progress, never contemplated that such progress would lead to a renewal of the revolutionary convulsions of the last century. They looked forward to a gradual development of what they termed Liberal principles by the peaceful operation of constitutional means. They supposed that Liberal

ministers would, by the working of Parliamentary institutions, gradually reach power, and that King Louis Philippe, himself an upholder of Parliamentary Government, would be either induced or constrained to choose more Liberal ministers, and to adopt a more Liberal policy. All reflecting minds had foreseen the crisis which led to the downfall of the elder Bourbons; all had been aware that for two or three years previous to 1830 a collision must inevitably arise between the principles of the old ultra-Royalists and the new ideas which had sprung up. Few, however, in this country at least, foresaw the sudden overthrow of the Monarchy under Louis Philippe, and the events of February 1848 were a startling surprise to all Europe. After the lapse of a quarter of a century, they still invite the careful study both of the practical statesman and the political philosopher.

We may begin by confidently asserting that no immediate cause of popular discontent, or of substantial grievance, existed at all adequate to account for the sudden overthrow of an established Government. France generally was quiet, peaceful, and prosperous; the financial condition of the country was not embarrassed; no new demands had been made upon her resources, and no fresh taxation imposed upon the people. The King harboured no designs against the Constitutional Government; his minister, M. Guizot, was a man of a high and pure character, the farthest removed from any tendency to despotism; the country enjoyed a Representative Constitution and a

Parliamentary Government, which no one dreamed of attacking; there was an active Opposition in the Chambers, under the guidance of leaders of great talent and energy, who carried Democratic principles very far; but they were not generally supposed to push them to the extent of revolution, but to carry on the contest within the limits of recognised Parliamentary warfare. Their avowed object was quite within these bounds; the suffrage in France was a restricted one, and they contended for a wider diffusion of the Franchise. The immediate cause of the insurrection was certainly not one which could of itself have led to the subversion of any firmly constituted Government. It was the suppression of a monster banquet, organised by the leaders of the Reform movement. It must remain a doubt how far the prominent leaders in the promotion of this banquet designedly promoted it with a deliberate design to overthrow the Monarchy, or how far they were subsequently borne away by the revolutionary torrent beyond the limits of their original purpose. Whatever may be the truth upon this point, there can be little doubt that the proclamation of the Republic was not accident, and that there were those behind them who advisedly intended to organise an insurrection for the subversion of Louis Philippe's throne and the substitution of a Republican form of government.

The history of these unexpected movements is a curious and instructive one. They must be sought for in the earlier periods of the French Revolution

of 1789, and in the seeds of anarchy which that great convulsion left in the soil, not withered and dead, as was supposed, but ready to germinate anew whenever circumstances should again bring them to the surface and expose them to the action of light and air. It was imagined that the horrors of that period of national insanity had left nothing but a permanent dread pervading all classes of the community. Few suspected the existence of a sect worshipping with fanatical zeal the principles of the 'Montagne,' and prepared to canonise Robespierre and Marat as heroes and martyrs. Few suspected that in the dirty and impure recesses of the Faubourg St.-Antoine, Belleville, and La Villette there still existed men brooding over all the wild theories of universal equality and of human perfectibility, rife at the close of the last century, and perfectly prepared to carry them out by recourse to a very extreme of ferocity and violence. The truth is that the doctrines of Jacobinism resemble some of those new diseases which appear from time to time to scourge mankind. These diseases, like the cholera, appear at times to have worn themselves out, but they are only dormant; they revive again when least expected, and run some new course of disease and death. They have a strange attraction for the lawless population of Paris, who secretly nourish all the wild dreams of that disastrous period. It would be a mistake to suppose that these men were mere vulgar ruffians intent on plunder; they are political fanatics, not ordinary criminals. They

may occasionally recruit their forces from the prisons or the hulks, but they maintain a stern discipline over these outcasts of society. '*Mort aux voleurs!*' is the first notice always proclaimed in these seasons of revolt, and probably there is no time when private property is more secure against pillage than when it is placed under the protection of the impromptu police of the Commune. It is not the outbreak of mere vulgar crime. It is the proclamation of a war against civilised society, constituted as it now is, to raze the edifice to its very foundations, that they may rebuild it anew according to their own abstract and chimerical theories.

These disciples of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who may be considered the founder of the sect, have for more than eighty years cherished these impossible theories, till they have become a political faith. Like the early Mahometans, like the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, and perhaps still more like the Thugs of India, their minds have become hardened into an ossified state of conviction, which is inaccessible to all the arguments derived from reason, experience, or common sense. They are sanguinary and remorseless zealots, ready to carry out their chimerical theories through the slaughter and destruction of their opponents, or, if fortune should be adverse, willing to die for them with the courage of martyrs. The very sincerity of their convictions, the daring courage with which they are ready to maintain them, and the ingenious, specious, sophistry with which they support them render them the

more dangerous. They may be considered an army of enthusiasts leagued together for the purpose of waging an internecine warfare against the very existence of civilisation.

Their political faith rests upon three bases, which I believe are freely avowed and glorified in by all the members of the fraternity of Jacobins, or Red Republicans, as they are now called. The first of these is the principle of the Equality of Man pushed to its most extravagant limits; they consider that all men were born equal, and that every inequality which the progress of society, or which human laws and institutions have created, is a usurpation and a violation of the eternal laws of nature. Therefore every distinction, every difference of rank or condition, every shade of social inequality, is to be eradicated by the most sweeping means. Kings, nobles, dignitaries of every profession, individuals invested with any honorary badge or mark of distinction, are *pro tanto* transgressors of that great law of equality and enemies of the human race.

The second principle of the Red Republican philosophy is the utter negation of all religion, whether natural or revealed. They are thorough materialists, and deny the existence of any spiritual soul apart from the body which it animates. As a necessary consequence, they abjure all belief in the immortality of the soul or in the existence of God. They equally view all creeds with the most impartial incredulity and contempt. They have special hostility against priests and ministers of religion, of

whatever sect, whom they denounce and ridicule as dangerous impostors.

The third principle is a war against the existence of property. '*La propriété c'est le vol*;' the maxim of Proudhon is a principal article in their system of politics. Property ought to be vested in the State alone, and distributed equally to the whole community. In this they are perhaps logical, for the existence of private property is totally inconsistent with universal equality among mankind. Perhaps it may be doubted whether such absurd fancies can really be entertained by a rational man, and whether I am not exaggerating in thus describing them. Such is by no means the case. Any hypocrisy or concealment is by no means among their faults. They are openly proclaimed and maintained with great ingenuity and subtlety in all their writings. The three great principles—

1st. The absolute Equality of Man,

2nd. The entire negation of Religion, whether natural or revealed,

3rd. The denial of any right to Property which can be possessed by any individual—

are the catechism of the Red Republican. There are, of course, many individuals who adopt these principles in a more limited and qualified form, for it is a necessary characteristic of this sect to branch out into every conceivable shade of doctrine and opinion, but its theories are in the main founded upon these principles.

It can scarcely be necessary to demonstrate to any

rational or well-educated mind the utter absurdity of these doctrines. It is palpable to common sense that they are absolutely destructive to human civilisation, and that, so far from containing the elements of progress or from leading mankind to a state of perfection hitherto unattained, they would wholly extinguish all civilisation and resolve society into a state of chaos. It needs, indeed, very little education to render this conclusion apparent even to the rudest intellects. I remember an honest ploughman once saying to me, 'It is of no use thinking of making all men equal; if you made them equal in the morning, they would all be unequal before night.' The wonder is how such transparent sophisms could ever be entertained for a moment by men of ordinary understanding or the slightest mental culture, and yet that they are so entertained by large bodies of active, daring, and enthusiastic men is a fact which admits of no dispute. They are impressed with all the fervour and zeal of fanaticism. Conscience is wholly deadened; all moral sense, all power of distinguishing between right and wrong, is entirely blotted out. They will pursue their Utopias through blood, the slaughter of the innocent, the disruption of all human ties, and, in proof of their sincerity, they will often meet death with a proud indifference which, in a better cause, would be deemed heroism. It is this peculiar feature which is very often overlooked in estimating the character of this sect. They are sincere, and dangerous in proportion to their sincerity. It was said of one of their leaders—

I think it was Robespierre—*‘Il ira loin, car il croit à ce qu’il dit.’*

It is unnecessary to waste time in controverting such insane dreams of a horrible and mischievous fanaticism. It is, however, very important that we should bear in mind the startling truth which has been revealed of late years, and which Liberal politicians have strong interest in ignoring. It is so far from being the case that the dangerous principles of the first French Revolution were a mere passing effervescence of momentary popular excitement, that their present existence in all their pristine vigour and virulence has been abundantly demonstrated of late years. There are daring leaders ready to push them to the utmost limits, and there are masses of misguided, ferocious men ready to fight for them, to murder for them, and, if necessary, to die for them. No statesman can blind himself to their existence. No theoretical philosopher who does not shut his eyes to the realities before him can dispute that, side by side with these gilded visions of human liberty and progress, stalks this appalling spectre of anarchy and blood.

I think that this revival of Jacobinism first began to agitate society in the Revolution of 1830. It was the most excusable, perhaps, of all which swept over France before or since; and partly on that account, perhaps, it had been successful, and had obtained a meed of praise peculiarly intoxicating to the French temperament. The following insurrection at General Lamarque’s funeral, in June 1832, at once evinced

the effect produced upon the wild spirits of Paris, which the triumph of the first had produced. This insurrection has none of the justification which may be urged for that of 1830. It was against a regular Government, which had done no act to provoke rebellion, and its avowed object was to change the form of government and establish a Republic. It exhibited too the strength of its partisans, and was within an ace of succeeding, and required all the military ability of the old Marshal of the Empire, aided by 60,000 regular troops and 20,000 National Guards of the *banlieue*, to suppress it. If momentarily discouraged by the failure, the Revolutionary chiefs had learnt the secret of their strength, they waited to renew their attempt on the first favourable occasion.

The Revolution which has its head-quarters at Paris possesses formidable local advantages. The military position, garrisoned as it is by a large though irregular army of enthusiastic men, many of whom are partially disciplined, and protected by their narrow streets and lofty barriers, is a formidable one. The Revolution has its head-quarters in a citadel of great natural strength, and if it once unfurls its banners can only be subdued by the regular operations of a large army. It has been almost uniformly aided by a large portion of the National Guard, and the defection of at least a portion of the troops employed against it is a danger always to be apprehended. The strong position which it thus occupies is placed in the immediate

vicinity of the seat of Government. All the departments of the State—Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the whole machinery of the Police, the place of meeting of the representatives of the people, the residences of the ministers, all are situated in the same city of Paris. Let a successful insurrection once gain possession of them; the whole machinery of executive government passes into their hands, the State is paralysed, and, with the docility which the provinces have almost always evinced in obeying the impulse given by the metropolis, the new form of government is immediately inaugurated. This is the constantly recurring story of French Revolutions during the last eighty years—Governments seem always to be placed on the crater of a volcano, from which they are periodically hurled into the air.

Such was the history of the French Revolution of February 1848, one of the most deplorable of the many which have desolated France. The suddenness of the catastrophe was stunning.

Fall of
King Louis
Philippe.

On the 21st of February the Government, presided over by M. Guizot, one of the ablest and most honest of French ministers, prohibited a monster banquet which was to have been held ostensibly to promote the cause of Parliamentary Reform, but really organised for more dangerous objects. The Revolutionary leaders took advantage of the excitement which this vigorous act of the Ministry produced to incite the bands of the faubourgs into open revolt. The King was wanting in that decision which he had displayed on former occasions. He yielded to the storm which

he thought to assuage by dismissing M. Guizot in the very midst of the crisis, and appointing his rival, M. Thiers, as his successor.

Such a display of weakness only encouraged the populace. A cruel stratagem was played off by the leaders in order to goad the people to fury. A detachment of soldiers guarded the bureau of Foreign Affairs in the Rue Neuve des Capucines. A mob having collected in front of these troops, one of the Revolutionary chiefs, said to have been Lagrange, fired a pistol from the midst of the crowd, and killed the officer commanding the detachment. This atrocious stratagem was attended with the desired result. The detachment, irritated to fury by the assassination of their commanding officer, fired into the mob without waiting for orders, and several of the rioters fell on the discharge. Everything had been prepared for this result. Biers were ready, on which the bodies were placed, and borne in ghastly procession through the streets of Paris, the incendiary chiefs everywhere proclaiming that the troops of the Government were slaughtering the people in cold blood, and calling upon the population to avenge them. The men of the 'Three Glorious Days of July' 1830, the combatants at the funeral of General Lamarque, readily answered the summons; barricades were raised, and another formidable revolt broke out. At this time the King, either recoiling from the necessity of causing a great effusion of blood, or losing the nerve he had exhibited on previous occasions, was wanting to the situation. Everything

might have been saved, for the troops were staunch and indignant witnesses of the slaughter by the mob of a party of gendarmes at the Château d'Eau. Marshal Bugeaud, the general in command, was an officer of high reputation, unflinching courage, and devoted to the interests of the Monarchy; but the King hesitated, the moment for action was lost, and in a few hours he was escaping from Paris as a fugitive.

Simultaneous Revolutionary movements in Europe.

The effect of this Revolution of February 1848, as compared with the former one of July 1830, upon the other European States is very striking. Little disturbance was comparatively effected by the first. The only important instance in which the French example was followed was that of Belgium, which had a successful street insurrection in the following month of September, which led to long diplomatic negotiations and the separation of Holland and Belgium into two kingdoms. The result was partly owing to the promptitude with which the Revolution was terminated in France by the elevation of King Louis Philippe to the vacant throne. The substitution of this temperate, pacific sovereign for the priest-ridden Bourbons changed but little the actual government of France. Louis Philippe was a constitutional monarch, anxious to rule in accordance with the principles of that form of government. Little was apparently changed beyond a shifting of the personages connected with the chief characters of the drama. A really constitutional monarch reigned in the place of a reactionary King, who had sought to overthrow the system esta-

blished in 1815, and to revert to the old monarchical *régime*. The Revolution of 1830 was rather a defensive movement against the counter-revolution than a new Democratic convulsion. The constitutional crown was placed upon the head of a Prince who had royal blood in his veins, and was, in fact, the next legitimate heir to the throne, failing the almost extinct elder branch of the Bourbons. The great military monarchies who had composed the Holy Alliance accepted the compromise and received Louis Philippe within the pale of the recognised sovereigns. England, under Lord Palmerston, threw her whole weight into the scale of peace and constitutional government. Chiefly by his diplomatic skill all the difficulties attending the separation of Holland and Belgium, and the erection of the latter into a separate kingdom, were smoothed over; and although grumblings of the Revolutionary party were occasionally heard, yet no outburst took place. King Louis Philippe accepted with gratitude his admission into the circle of European sovereigns, and two years afterwards, when his minister described the suppression of the Polish revolt in the phrase, '*L'ordre règne à Varsovie*,' proclaimed his adhesion to the cause of established thrones in words which exasperated to fury the Revolutionary parties in Europe. The Spanish and Portuguese Revolutions, which followed on the death of King Ferdinand VII. a few years after, were rather owing to local causes than to the direct agency of the Revolutionary propaganda. I think we may say that the 'Three Days' contest in Paris

in July 1830 were followed by, no outbreak of Jacobinism in Europe. But the overthrow of King Louis Philippe in February 1848 exhibited a very different result. That Revolution was an aggressive one. It was a Democratic attack upon thrones and kingly governments, and it was felt as a call to arms by all the Revolutionists in Europe. The Emperor was obliged by popular violence to fly from Vienna ; Rossi was assassinated, and the Pope was driven as a fugitive from Rome ; the Northern Italians, under Charles Albert, attacked the Austrians commanded by Radetsky ; Berlin was the scene of struggles between the populace and the military ; in England even the great Chartist demonstration of April 10, 1848, showed that the spirit of revolution existed in our country ; everywhere it appeared that the war of Democratic anarchy against established governments was ready to break out.

The period of confusion and anarchy which followed the overthrow of the Orleans dynasty is full of instruction to the political observer. It reveals a state of things previously unsuspected by the mass of the community in Europe, and denied above all by those advanced Liberals who always identified the cause of human progress and civilisation with the extension of Democracy. It proclaimed the fact that Jacobinism had survived through all the changes which had swept over France, and was as active and as dangerous a power as it could have been in the days of Robespierre. All the characteristics of that disastrous period were reproduced with remarkable

fidelity. There was Lamartine, a second La Fayette, vain, visionary, and enthusiastic, totally unable to grapple with the tremendous crisis he found himself in face of. There were Ledru-Rollin and Causidière, the violent Democratic leaders who had pushed aside men like Odillon-Barrot and Garnier-Pagès. There was Louis Blanc, the speculative, dreaming sophist, intent upon reconstructing society upon a scheme of his own in the midst of this chaos. There were Barbès and Blanqui and the Revolutionary leaders of a yet 'Redder' hue, recalling Robespierre, Marat, and the fiercest tyrants of the Mountain. Paris swarmed with clubs in which Robespierre was openly eulogised as the greatest of political heroes and martyrs, and the guillotine worshipped under the canting nickname of 'Marie.' Louis Blanc's national workshops were involving the finances in growing debts and embarrassments, and the universal suppression of commerce was reducing the people to an extreme of poverty. All this distress and anarchy reproduced one of the remarkable features of the first French Revolution, which was the singular rapidity with which one set of leaders succeeded to another, and each party was in turn submerged by another wave of Democratic fury. The Provisional Government was assailed by a new and formidable power, the whole force of the Red Republic pouring from its strongholds in the faubourgs, and attacking the tottering Provisional Government titularly presided over by Lamartine.

This new contest in the streets of Paris was the fiercest which had yet been waged. It threw into

the shade the 'Glorious Three Days' of July 1830, and the revolt at the funeral of General Lamarque, and the combats which led to the fall of Louis Philippe in February 1848. All the strength of the Revolutionary bands was marshalled under the red flag, and for three days the infuriated insurgents held all constituted authority at bay. The result was very doubtful, but General Cavaignac's elevation to a sort of dictatorship saved France from a new Reign of Terror. He was an able and determined general, and he exhibited in his own person the truth of the remark, which he afterwards made in the Assembly, that the suppression of such revolts as had become periodical in Paris was not to be treated as a matter of police and civil government, in which the army was merely an auxiliary, but as a military operation, to be conducted by military commanders and according to the rules of military science.

Another fact was evidenced by this struggle; the troops who had been disaffected in July 1830, and who, owing to the weakness of Louis Philippe, had not been tried in February 1848, were now perfectly loyal and strongly hostile to the mob. Such is generally the case whenever these sort of national conflicts are prolonged. There is a natural antagonism between the army and the mob, which sooner or later displays itself. The two forces may occasionally and temporarily sympathise with each other and act in unison, but such an agreement is never lasting. It is a law of political society—we may, indeed, add of human nature—that Democratic

anarchy sooner or later calls into existence the opposing force of military power, by which it is in the end subdued.

The revolt of the Red Republicans in June 1848 was the most formidable which had yet shaken Paris. For three days the contest was doubtful. The insurgents had full possession of the western half of Paris, and fought with desperate valour for the conquest of the remaining portion. The troops under Cavaignac, Lamoricière, and other generals fought with determined valour, and the contest was finally decided by the large masses of reinforcements, both of the regular troops and of the National Guard, which poured in from all quarters of the provinces. Paris was then, as it always has been, the very centre of the Revolution, but for the first time the provinces rose against Paris, and resisted the dictation of the sanguinary leaders of the populace. The contest at length terminated in the complete triumph of the army, backed as it was by all the public sentiment and much of the material force of the rest of France. There is one characteristic of the first French Revolution which reappeared on this occasion in all its original loathsomeness. It was the savage ferocity which inspired the women, who even exceeded the men in their barbarous cruelty. Numbers of the Garde Mobile, youths who fought gallantly for the cause of order, when taken prisoners were massacred in cold blood by these female fiends. The murder of General Brea and his aide-de-camp, carrying a flag of truce, and entering

the enemy's lines with the benevolent purpose of restoring tranquillity, was another frightful violation of all the laws of honourable warfare, worthy of the blood-stained annals of 1792.

General Cavaignac's triumph was another signal proof of the truth of the fact that military science and discipline, when firmly and unsparingly used, will always overcome the efforts of the irregular forces of a town population even under the most favourable conditions. This fact has received another proof in the late contest between the Commune and the troops under Marshal MacMahon.

Election of
Louis
Napoleon
to the Pre-
sidency of
the Repub-
lic.

General Cavaignac's success in this important struggle, which saved France from anarchy and the Red Republic, and the general vigour and moderation of his policy, would, it might have been anticipated, have paved the way to his elevation to the office of President of the Republic, for which he was now a candidate, but Fortune or Providence was preparing for a new and unexpected change in the ever-varying drama of French politics. How strange an element is it in that great complex machine a national existence, that some unsuspected and dormant influence lying buried in the deepest recesses of the people's hearts and thoughts suddenly bursts forth into renewed vitality! The beginning of the year 1848 has afforded one instance of this in the outburst of Jacobinical violence, and the renewal of the anarchy of the Reign of Terror. The close of the same year exhibited a still more remarkable instance of it in the universal demonstration of

attachment evinced by the whole people of France towards the heir of the great Napoleon. Prince Louis Napoleon had been a wanderer and an exile. His personal qualities could have been known to few. His course had been signalised hitherto only by the two unsuccessful attempts at Strasburg and Boulogne, which were considered as marking rather Quixotism than ability, and which impressed the general public with no very exalted estimate of his capacity. In France he was regarded with favour by none of the political parties. Legitimists, Orleanists, and Republicans were equally opposed to him. It was indeed known that there dwelt in the memory of the nation an enthusiastic attachment to the name of the great conqueror, but no one could have imagined that it contained a spell by which to raise all France, and to unite it in favour of his almost unknown descendant. Yet when the Assembly, by its vote of October 7, decided upon referring the choice of the President of the Republic to the whole people voting by universal suffrage, the extraordinary power which the mere name of Napoleon exercised over the nation became at once apparent. Prince Louis Napoleon was elected by 5,334,000 votes, while General Cavaignac, his only real competitor, received only 1,448,000, all the other candidates—Ledru-Rollin, Raspail, Lamartine, and Changarnier—each obtaining a mere handful of votes.

The triumph of Louis Napoleon was so utterly opposed to all the opinions and theories of the political parties in France, and so entirely subversive of

the doctrines of Liberalism throughout Europe, that every attempt has been made to explain it away, but the fact remains. The subsequent *plébiscites* by which the Empire was raised and confirmed are represented as the result of corruption and undue influence exercised over the constituencies by the agents of government, as if it were possible so to account for the almost unanimous suffrage of a whole nation. But even such flimsy explanations are wanting on this first occasion, when the power of government was in the hands of General Cavaignac himself, and therefore might be presumed to be exercised in his own favour. If ever an election expressed the will of a whole people, it was that of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency of the Republic in December 1848.

If the election of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency of the Republic was a surprise to Europe, the remarkable ability which he soon displayed in dealing with all the difficulties which beset him in his new position was an additional marvel. I remember, in a conversation which I had with a leading Orleanist about that period, his predicting that the government of the new President could not last six weeks, and it was generally considered that the rule of a man who is believed to be a rash adventurer sustained only by the traditional glory which his uncle's name reflected on his descendant, could be but of very transient duration. But it soon became evident to impartial observers that the President had inherited much more than a mere name from his great relative. All the first steps in his course

evinced profound sagacity, and a thorough appreciation of all the circumstances by which he was surrounded. He seemed completely imbued with all the political genius of the first Napoleon, and the dexterity with which he threaded his way in the midst of hostile parties, watching for an opportunity to overthrow him, strongly reminded those familiar with the history of his uncle and that remarkable period in his life which preceded the 18 Brumaire. Indeed, whoever has read the '*Idées Napoléoniennes*' must be aware how completely the nephew was imbued with the whole nature and policy of the first Napoleon.

In the following years, 1850 and 1851, I spent some time in France and Italy, and in revisiting my old haunts, was deeply impressed with the universal feeling of dislike and distrust inspired by the Republic. No one appeared to regard it as otherwise than as a provisional state of things, while alarm for the future and a sense of general insecurity pervaded all classes. It was at this period that a number of publications, written with great ability, began to attract attention. They advocated a new theory, entitled '*Césarisme*,' which was set forth in the pages of newspapers, particularly a very able one published under the title of '*Le Napoléon*.' The French people have always been fond of selecting examples and parallels from ancient history since the first French Revolution. Hair-dressers and drawing-masters, clerks and valets, were dignified with the names of Brutus and Cato, Scipio and Regulus.

'Césarisme.'

Parallels between periods of the Roman history and the modern French Revolutionary annals were quite in accordance with the habits and thought of the people, and there were many points of similarity between the later days of the Roman Republic and that of France to suggest a comparison. The advocates of 'Césarisme' argued that there were periods in the history of a nation, particularly during the advanced stage of its existence, when all the various elements which had constituted its social organisation being broken up, the only refuge against chaos lay in the rule of some master mind capable of controlling the warring elements of anarchy, and governing in the interest of the whole nation. Such, they contended, had been the state of the Roman Republic, broken into fragments by the fierce contentions of patricians and plebeians, crushed under the proscriptions of Sylla and the civil wars of Marius. The union of order and freedom became impossible, and the only practical form of civilised government was to be found under the sway of a mighty genius like Julius Cæsar, or the wise and politic statesman like his nephew. The application of the doctrine to the case of the two Napoleons was obvious. In the career of the first Napoleon was already repeated the history of Julius Cæsar, while his nephew had every quality necessary for acting the part of Augustus. It would be difficult accurately to distinguish between a Cæsar and an absolute monarch; indeed, the only difference seemed to be that the Cæsar was of more recent origin and supposed to be more distinguished by great personal qualities.

The policy of the new President at this period of his career was a masterly one. He had been elected by a vast majority of the people, but he was far from possessing a majority in the Assembly. The composition of that Assembly, returned by universal suffrage immediately after the overthrow of Louis Philippe, was a very remarkable one. Few would have anticipated the result of that election. I have two diagrams published at that time; the one representing the French Chamber, which was of a semi-circular form, in which each deputy had his allotted place marked with his name. This plan of the Chamber was coloured according to the politics or party of each member, and as these were generally well known, the return was as correct as that of 'Dod's Parliamentary Companion.' The other diagram was a map of France, in which the different parts were coloured according to the geographical limits of the parties. The two together gave a most accurate idea of the political composition of the Assembly, and of the preponderance of the different shades of opinion in the various departments of France. The Assembly was divided pretty equally into three parts; the one coloured red marking the Republicans of extreme opinions; another blue, denoting Orleanists, moderate politicians, of moderate or neutral opinions; the third, white, distinguished the Legitimists. I experienced considerable surprise at the time to find the Red Republicans occupied most of the large cities, and extended over the whole of the East and parts of

Composi-
tion of the
Assembly.

the South of France. Alsace and Lorraine, now annexed to Germany, were almost exclusively red; the North and great portions of the centre of France were blue; and the Legitimists embraced almost the whole of the West and portions of the South and South-west. It caused me considerable surprise also to find that after so many years the Legitimist party were still numerically so strong, both in the country and in the Chamber. I had imagined that, after so many years since the first French Revolution, which was directed against the throne, the nobles, and the Church, after the second expulsion of the Bourbons in 1830, and the many changes which had swept over France, Legitimacy was confined to the Faubourg St.-Germain and the few descendants of the ancient families of France who still haunted the stately but faded apartments. But the results of universal suffrage told a different tale. The great strength of Legitimacy, which had survived all these adverse influences, proves how difficult it is to obliterate great national divisions in society, or to extirpate whole classes who have once formed a constituent portion of a people. It exhibits also the absence of energy, of intellectual force, which had reduced so large a portion of the French nation, possessed also, after all their reverses, of a considerable share of the territory, to vegetate thus unknown strangers to the political life of the nation.

Struggle
between
that body
and the
President.

These three great divisions of the Assembly, irreconcilably opposed on most matters, were agreed in hostility to the person and political rule of the

President. If at the commencement they had voted the repeal of the law exiling him from France, and if in October they had opened the way to his elevation to the Presidency by placing the choice not in themselves, but in the people at large, both these steps had been taken in ignorance of the power of his name in France; neither did they at all anticipate that this power might be conferred upon one so fully endowed with the talent and ability necessary to wield it. When these facts became evident, the opposition to the President became general, and the following two years were occupied in a struggle between these rival authorities. The writers in the 'Napoléon' and other organs of the Bonapartes assumed a broader and bolder line of argument. They defended the whole Constitution established by the first Napoleon after the 18 Brumaire, which was in fact a mere shadow of the representative system, veiling a really absolute monarchy. They attacked the entire principle of Parliamentary Government. They contended that, so far from being favourable to freedom, it necessarily involved the subjection of a minority often little inferior in number to the majority, and generally comprising the largest portion of the property and intelligence of the country. They asserted that it had uniformly failed in France, to which it was quite unsuited; that in 1790-1792 it had led to the fall and execution of Louis XVI., followed by the Reign of Terror; that the two experiments made under the Bourbons in 1815, and the Orleanists in 1830, had equally ended in the

Opposition
to the
principle
of Parlia-
mentary
Govern-
ment.

overthrow of these two Governments ; that the only country in which the Parliamentary system had worked successfully had been England, where it had existed in a very qualified and limited form, controlled by the large aristocratic element which directly or indirectly was blended with all the institutions of the country ; that in France, where no such counterpoise existed, it could never enjoy permanent existence ; that in a country so shattered and broken up by successive revolutions it would always be a mere cloak for the anarchical designs of ambitious demagogues ; that it had no real hold on the affections of the French nation, who always looked upon it as a foreign importation alien to their habits and fraught with danger to social order.

These positions were violently combated by the Republicans, who represented them as opposed to the spirit of the age and to all the principles of progress. The Orleanists also were actively intriguing to the restoration of King Louis Philippe, and were supposed to have a powerful supporter in General Changarnier, who commanded the military force of Paris.

Events
which pre-
ceded the
coup d'état
of Decem-
ber 1851.

It was quite evident that a crisis of some kind was impending, and this crisis was expected to arrive in the spring of 1852, when the President's term of office would expire. But Napoleon had no intention of postponing the struggle until that period. He knew and felt that the great mass of the French people looked to him as their protector against another period of anarchy. It was manifest that

the immense majority by whom he had been elected President, while personally almost a stranger to them, was intended as a protest against that Republican form of government, which in February 1848 had been a surprise upon the nation. The phrase *coup d'état* has subsequently been lavishly bestowed as a term of reproach upon December 2, 1851, but there never was a more complete *coup d'état* than that by which the Revolutionary leaders, in February 1848, overthrew the Government of Louis Philippe. The Republicans appeared to consider that they had a monopoly of *coups d'état*, that it was perfectly lawful and regular for the Democrats at any time to spring a mine upon regular Governments, but that a similar means of attack employed against them is treason and a political crime of the deepest dye. Yet the simple truth of the case was that the Republic of 1848 had been established by a handful of Revolutionary Democrats without the slightest concurrence or sanction on the part of the nation, and that when it raised Louis Napoleon to the office of the Chief of the State, it plainly signified a protest against the form of government which had been thrust upon it. Who could ever have voted for him upon any other grounds? His personal qualifications they were ignorant of. He was only known as having, by two daring though unsuccessful attempts, aimed at restoring the dynasty of his uncle, which had been overthrown by foreign armies against all the efforts of the nation. Could any expression of the popular wish have been more distinct than that

declared by their selection of Louis Napoleon at such a time? He knew also that the sentiment in his favour among the nation was doubly shared by the army, always enthusiastically attached to the memory of their great general.

Under these circumstances both parties approached the final struggle, which all foresaw, like two chess-players watching each other's moves. Napoleon's game was played with infinite skill. The obstacle in his path was General Changarnier, who was devoted to the Orleans Government, and who, while commander of the military force in Paris, held the key of the position. Napoleon approached this question very cautiously, but he at length took advantage of a favourable occasion to effect the dismissal of Changarnier by his authority as President. He was no doubt acting within the limits of his legal power, and Changarnier probably recoiled from raising the standard of revolt against the constituted authority of the Chief of the State. The army, officers and men, were so much attached to the great name which the President bore that Changarnier, if acting against him, might very likely have found himself in the position of Macdonald when deserted by the troops in 1815. He acquiesced in his dismissal, and from that moment the success of Napoleon was secured. The Republicans were surprised. They were looking forward to the period, a few months later, when the term of the President's office would have expired, and the new appeal to the people was to be made in some shape. But just as the Repub-

licans had, in February 1848, converted a change of ministry, which was a perfectly legal and constitutional act, into a *coup d'état*, changing the whole form of government by the agency of the Jacobin hordes of the faubourgs, so Napoleon retaliated by a *coup d'état* in his turn, directed against this novel and usurping Republic. The details are fresh in the recollection of all who have taken any interest in the later history of Europe. The hostile leaders were arrested, the Assembly dissolved, and the Republic—the child of a revolution—not three years old, ceased to exist.

The exasperation of the Republicans and the hostility felt by the other political parties in France to the revival of the Bonapartes has caused them to colour all the events connected with this counter-Revolution with violent partiality and prejudice. It is never remembered that when Louis Napoleon was elected President by five and a half millions of Frenchmen it was because he was known as the representative, not of Republicanism, but of totally different principles, and it was because the whole nation disliked and dreaded the form of government which had been imposed upon them by a surprise. The new Republic had no hold upon the loyalty of the people any more than it had when the opinions of the President became known, and he had been selected by the five and a half millions of Frenchmen against all the influences of the existing Government, not as the defender of the Republic, but as its known opponent.

Reflections
upon the
coup d'état.

The Assembly had placed itself in such a position of antagonism to Napoleon that the fall of one or the other was inevitable. The defeat of the President would have been the signal for the renewal of those fearful struggles with the spirit of anarchy which had been suppressed at such an expense of blood by General Cavaignac in June 1848. The different sections into which the Assembly was divided could none of them give the least promise of stability, and the wisest and most experienced statesmen were totally unable to foresee what would be the result at the termination of the President's period of office. The bold initiative by which he anticipated the intrigues of the different factions, and put an end to this state of chronic revolution, was welcomed by the great body of the nation. The measures were effected without any struggle or unnecessary harshness towards the leaders of the opposite factions in and out of the Assembly. Nowhere did any of these leaders raise the standard of resistance, and the change probably would have been effected without the least disturbance, had not the old revolutionary bands of the Faubourgs made an attempt to avail themselves of the opportunity to renew the warfare in the streets.

Attempt of
the revo-
lutionary
party to
overthrow
the Presi-
dent.

It appeared that on the morning of the 3rd December, after the *coup d'état* had been successfully accomplished, and all opposition on the part of the Assembly or any constituted authority had entirely subsided, attempts were made by some of the most extreme Democrats to raise the Faubourgs; those hotbeds of revolutionary anarchy ever since the year

1792. Leaders of the disturbances raised all the old revolutionary war cries. M. Baudin and some other members of the Assembly of ultra-democratic principles rode through the streets of the Faubourg St.-Antoine urging the population to revolt, and they answered to the call of the old traditionary war whoop of Jacobinism, but with less than their usual ardour. The crushing defeat they had sustained two years before from the army under Cavaignac had abated their confidence and deprived them of many of their most trusted leaders. Still they obeyed the summons, and on the morning of the 4th the campaign was opened with the usual erection of barricades in the thoroughfares.

Now it is quite evident that the President when he broke off with the Assembly, and in fact declared war against it, could not be expected to recede before an armed mob. A repetition of the attempts of the Parisian Jacobins must have been anticipated, and it would have been extreme weakness after having carried out his scheme in his contest with the Assembly to yield the fruits of his policy to these veteran champions of anarchy. Holding at his disposition a powerful military force enthusiastically attached to his name, and backed by the friends of order throughout France, it was impossible to conceive for a moment that Louis Napoleon would shrink from the combat to which he was defied by the Red Republicans, and abandon Paris to a new Reign of Terror. It might be a question capable of argument whether he ought not to have awaited the storm

with which France was threatened at the dissolution of the term of his Presidency ; but having decided upon taking the initiative in the coming struggle, it would have been the most imbecile weakness to have surrendered, not to the Assembly, but to the hordes of *sans-culottes* whom the old anarchical watchwords had drawn from their foul dens ; and we must remember that when it was once determined to oppose force to force, and to fight the Revolution in the streets, no half-measures could be thought of. Were a mob to create a riot in peaceable London, or even were two factions to raise disturbances as lately took place in Belfast, a feeling of humanity might inspire extreme reluctance to resort to the most rigorous use of the military force. There would be a consciousness of superior strength on the part of regular troops supported by artillery which would induce great forbearance in the exercise of it. Every means of conciliation would probably be tried before all the resources of modern military science would be employed against undisciplined crowds, whom it would be reasonably supposed would be scattered upon the first attack. But there could be no place for such merciful tenderness in the employment of military force against the desperate hordes of revolutionary Paris. These men constitute, when fighting upon their own ground, an army of the most formidable description. They are not entitled to claim a particle of that forbearance which brave soldiers may be inclined to show to enemies whose weakness they despise. They have contended repeatedly within the

last forty years with the most experienced generals and the best disciplined troops. They had overturned two thrones and expelled two dynasties. Even when not victorious they had contended against Marshal Soult in June 1832, and against General Cavaignac in June 1848, with determined valour and with a near approach to success. Upon their own ground in the narrow quarters of Paris, and versed as they were in the peculiar tactics of street warfare, they were most formidable antagonists to any army.

The first object and primary necessity of every general is to conquer, and no commander could afford to neglect any means of insuring victory against insurgents who had defeated Marmont, and taxed to the utmost extent the powers of Soult and Cavaignac. When, on the 4th December, barricades were raised at the Porte St.-Denis and some of the adjacent quarters, it could not be a matter of reproach against the President or his generals if these defences were instantly attacked. I do not apprehend, indeed, that these hostile movements against the barricades or their defenders who raised the standard of open revolt were made the grounds of censure against Napoleon, but that the charge brought against him was not that he carried the barricades, not that he dispersed their defenders, but that he directed an indiscriminate massacre of peaceable citizens, not offering any armed resistance to the troops. It is not very easy, even with all the means of obtaining official information from the

combatants on both sides, to acquire an accurate knowledge of facts. The confusion consequent upon various operations carried on at the same time in different quarters renders it extremely difficult to know the history of the different parts which form the total of the conflict. The Duke of Wellington, when once asked by a lady of his acquaintance 'what a battle was like,' replied, 'A battle is very much like a ball; nobody dancing at one end of the ball-room can know anything about what is going on at the other.' But this difficulty, which is felt so much in regular warfare, becomes greatly increased in these street fights with an insurgent populace. On one side at least there is no official information whatever, and the leaders, or those who are associated in the struggles, have every possible motive to conceal the truth, to distort the facts, and to vilify their opponents with every species of misrepresentation.

Out of the mass of contradictory statements by which these transactions have been obscured a few facts appear to be certain. The insurrection began early on the 4th December, and was attempted by hordes of the old revolutionary bands issuing from the Faubourg St.-Antoine, La Villette, Belleville, and the old head-quarters of the Revolution since 1789. The insurgent forces poured down the thoroughfares till they came to the central position round the Porte St.-Denis and the adjacent narrow streets. It was in this neighbourhood that the last desperate resistance was made to Marshal Soult in 1832, when, after giving the rebels ten minutes to

surrender (a proposal which they fiercely rejected), he ordered an attack which annihilated them. Here upon this historic ground of street warfare the ferocious bands of the Parisian Faubourgs, the descendants of those who for 80 years had led the Jacobinical revolutions which had shattered successive governments in France, raised their old standards and erected their barricades. So far the march of events is known and certain. The army of Paris, acting under the command of Napoleon's generals, poured rapidly in large masses along the Boulevards of the Chausée-d'Antin. It does not appear that they encountered any barricades till arriving at the Porte St.-Denis, where they found the first of these fortifications extemporised in the usual manner, and defended by the veterans of revolution. They assailed these ramparts with all the gallantry and enthusiasm of the French troops fighting for a cause they loved, a name they worshipped, and against the mob of Paris, between whom and themselves there had grown up a bitter animosity. It does not appear that the descendants of the *sans-culottes* showed upon this occasion the same stubborn and desperate courage which they had at different former times exhibited. Perhaps the tremendous defeat which they had sustained two years before at the hands of Cavaignac had somewhat broken their spirit. Perhaps the knowledge that they were confronted by a united and disciplined force, that there were no National Guards secretly banded with them, no defection to be hoped for in the ranks of

their opponents, paralysed their efforts. Certain it is that the struggle was less severe and prolonged than it had been on former occasions; and having encountered a comparatively feeble resistance, the troops soon became masters of all those points at which armed insurrection had been attempted. Here begins and ends the narrative of what may be considered the principal event of the day. At the Porte St.-Denis the revolutionary forces of Paris, the descendants of the men of 1789 and of 1792, of the men who had expelled Charles X. and Louis Philippe, and deluged Paris with blood at the funeral of General Lamarque in June 1848, tried again to play their old game, but with less good fortune than had often attended them, and were somewhat easily defeated and dispersed.

Charge
against
him for
having
ordered the
massacre
of unarmed
spectators
on the
Boule-
vards.

But there occurred an episode in the history of this important day which has drawn more attention than the main event, like the underplot of a drama, which may attract more interest than the principal action of the play. The troops, who poured in masses along the western Boulevards from the Madeleine to the scene of action at the Porte St.-Denis, are accused, in the course of their march, of having opened a murderous fire on the inoffensive and unarmed spectators who crowded these customary resorts of the pleasure-seeking Parisians, actuated only by curiosity and guiltless of any act or even thought of hostility to the troops. It is this proceeding on the part of the soldiery which has been put forward by the enemies of Napoleon, whether Jacobins, Com-

munists, Orleanists, or Republicans, in order to accuse him of having founded the Empire by acts of wholesale massacre and bloodshed. It is inconceivable that a ruler so wise and prudent as the Emperor should have stained the commencement of his reign by an act of cruelty as unnecessary as unjustifiable. He was not at war with the peaceable, respectable bourgeoisie of the Chaussée-d'Antin, or with the frequenters of Tortoni's or the Café Riche. He could have no conceivable object in ordering an indiscriminate slaughter of the crowds thus composed, who, it is always stated, were unarmed, not meditating any attack upon the soldiers, and never expecting one from them. Yet it seems tolerably certain that collisions did take place along this line of the Boulevards, and that lives were lost by the fire of the troops. To what extent and under what provocation these results took place has never yet been ascertained. We must remember that the French army is composed of soldiers under a much looser discipline and far more impulsive than are our English troops, and that Paris had frequently been the scene of desperate fights between the mob and the regular forces, and that on this occasion they went prepared to encounter the deadliest hostility from the army of the streets. It is quite possible that in this frame of mind they did not discriminate very closely between enemies and mere spectators, and that some accidental circumstance spread a kind of panic through their ranks and gave them a sudden impression that they were assailed on their flanks during their

march. It would have been extremely difficult under such circumstances to have restrained the troops from resorting to the use of their arms. I have often heard it confidently asserted that this lamentable collision was the result of a stratagem of the Red Republicans, anxious to produce the very consequences which followed. One or two houses were occupied by Red Republicans, who secured an immediate retreat in the rear of the houses. They then fired a volley upon the troops from the windows, and immediately effected their escape by the back entrances. The troops concluded that they were assailed by the forces of the Faubourgs firing at them from the windows according to their usual tactics; they returned the fire, and the alarm once created spread along other portions of the line. Such a stratagem would have been almost the exact counterpart of the proceedings in February 1848, in front of the Bureau des Affaires Étrangères in the Rue des Capucines, when a Red Republican drew the fire of the troops by killing the officer with a pistol, and when the soldiers, in retaliation, had fired into the crowd, some of whom fell, placed their bodies on biers and carried them in procession throughout the city. I do not think that there has ever been any well-authenticated return of the number of victims to the fire of the troops along the Boulevards on December 4th. A cool review of all the circumstances leads to the strong presumption that it was an unauthorised and accidental occurrence, the importance of which, and the number of

the victims, had been grossly exaggerated. I think it made a far stronger impression upon the public mind in England than in France, for all parties are far more accustomed than we are to the intervention of military force, and far less tender of human life.

Had this incident, however, been of the grave importance that it was represented to be in the journals of the time, it would have left more certain records. If a massacre of the respectable citizens of the Boulevards had really taken place, the numbers and names of the victims would have been known. If, after the lapse of twenty years, we can venture to take a dispassionate retrospective view of these occurrences, or hope to obtain a consideration for them in a similar spirit, we may adopt the following conclusions :—1st. The *coup d'état*, by which Napoleon in fact revived the Empire, was accomplished on December 2nd, when he dissolved the Assembly and secured all the leaders of the opposing parties. 2nd. The insurrection or *émeute* of December 4th was not raised in the name or by the authority of the Assembly ; nor did it in any way proclaim itself as fighting under the banner of that body, or acting in defence of the new Constitution of 1848. It was the men of the Red Republic sallying out from their old haunts, which, ever since the first Revolution, have been the head-quarters of anarchy and Jacobinism, and who endeavoured to strike a blow at the President before his power should be consolidated. It was the men who had expelled Louis

Philippe, who had waged a terrible struggle with General Cavaignac during the 'Three Days' of June 1848, and who lately have carried on the war of the Commune in 1871, who sought to obtain the mastery in Paris. 3rd. The military movements ordered by Napoleon on this December 4th were directed against these ancient adversaries to civil order. It was only in Paris that they opposed an armed resistance to his troops. The sole real combat was against them at the barricades on the Faubourg St.-Denis. The real question at issue was whether Napoleon should overcome this army of anarchy, or whether the flag of the Red Republic should float triumphantly over both the President and the Assembly. No one can for a moment suppose that had the men of the Faubourgs gained a triumph over the troops the scattered Assembly would have been re-established in power. A provisional government according to revolutionary precedent would have been immediately proclaimed, and would have consisted of the leaders of the armed revolt, and Paris and probably France would have been under the dominion of the fanatical apostles of communism.

Having once declared war against the weak and divided Assembly, no choice was left to Napoleon but to crush the revolt of the Jacobins. All France, all Europe, the cause of civilisation itself imperatively demanded that he should not hand over all the power of the State to these disciples of anarchy. It has been very convenient to all the enemies of Imperialism to represent Napoleon as commencing his

government by inaugurating a reign of terror, and making the peaceable Boulevards the scenes of an indiscriminate massacre directed against inoffensive citizens, and commencing his rule by acts of cruel despotism. They would have been glad to represent him as a second Mahmoud slaughtering the Janisseries, or another Mahomet Ali extirpating the Mamelukes; but neither the character of the man, nor the circumstances whether at the time or subsequently, warrant these gross exaggerations. The whole French nation ratified the acts of the President a few days after by the most conspicuous and striking approval which was perhaps ever expressed by a united people, and the plébiscite of December 24th is an answer to all the charges which more in this country than in France have been brought against the Emperor. No event in recent history gave a more formal contradiction to all those doctrines which under various appellations have disturbed and unsettled the whole framework of human society since the year 1789 than the elevation of Louis Napoleon to supreme authority in France, and the ratification of the act by the voice of the whole people. It was the condemnation of every principle which the disciples of the new political philosophy had maintained by the sentence of the very tribunal which they had themselves invested with absolute authority. It is natural to expect that this sentence would be disputed, and that every species of misrepresentation would be resorted to in the attempt to set it aside. The sovereignty of the

people was the great dogma of 1789, and it has continued to be the cardinal creed of Revolution ever since. Yet no acts whatever more indisputably expressed the will of the whole nation than the three successive votes: the first on December 20th, 1848, when he was elected President by a majority of 3,886,000 over General Cavaignac; the second on the dissolution of the Assembly on December 24th, 1851, by a majority of nearly 7,000,000; and on the 1st December, 1852, by an equal number of votes.

Now the pretext put forward by those who would dispute this national verdict three times solemnly pronounced is that it was obtained by the undue influence of government, by intimidation, misrepresentation, and the unsparing exercise of every art which can corrupt an election. Such a proposition is in my view of the case not merely untenable, but utterly false and irrational. The population of France at the period was somewhere about 35,000,000, the males would therefore be about 17,000,000, and the adult portion may roughly be taken at half that number, 8,500,000. It may safely be assumed that so near an approximation to the whole adult male population of a people never before gave a collective vote on any great national question. We must remember that the first of these votes could not possibly have owed anything to the influence of government, since the actual power and authority in the State were vested in the hands of General Cavaignac. All those influences, whatever they were, must have been employed not for but

against the candidature of Louis Napoleon. The overwhelming majority which he obtained over an opponent who was personally so unexceptional as General Cavaignac was conclusive evidence of the favour and popularity which he enjoyed in the eyes of the French nation. Is it then to be assumed that all this popularity, which brought him more than 5,000,000 votes against all government influence in 1848, had altogether disappeared, and that when his two appeals to the people in December 1851 and 1852 were answered by returns of nearly two millions additional votes—that all this vast majority which in 1848 was indisputably the voice of the people, in 1851 and 1852 only expressed a corrupt return which had stifled the real sentiment of the nation? A more preposterous allegation could hardly have issued from a sane mind. How could it be conceived possible thus to intimidate or to bribe a whole nation voting by universal suffrage and the ballot? By what machinery can the disciples of the new philosophy ever hope to ascertain the real will of the people if these means have, as they allege, so utterly failed?

No class of men is more impervious to argument and hold their preconceived opinions more tenaciously than the disciples of the new theories of popular government. They have arrived at certain conclusions which they call principles from their own deductions. Premises and conclusions are equally new and untried; they are experiments upon human society and human nature, yet they will never admit

them to be mere experiments, or consent to subject them to the test of experience. They are prepared to cling to their new political religion with a faith as blind and as regardless of facts as ever animated the votaries of any new form of superstition—the belief in Johanna Southcote, or in Joe Smith. Now since 1789 they have been perpetually declaiming on the sovereignty of the people as the sole source of legitimate power; they have condemnad all existing governments as usurpations and despotisms, unless they can derive a clear title from this source; and yet when a whole people concur almost unanimously in establishing a certain form of government, these philosophers protest against the act because it does not square with their ideas of what ought to be the popular voice. In the case of France in 1851, they will never admit the plain fact that the nation, surfeited with Revolution, disgusted with all the follies, all the absurdities, and all the crimes which had torn the country for more than 60 years, rallied round the watchword of a name they adored, and for the second time in half a century sought to lay the demon of Revolution by the spell of the name of Napoleon.

The events which preceded and caused the restoration of the Empire dispose of another favourite theory constantly put forward by the more moderate and temperate advocates of the French Revolution. In their view of the case this portentous convulsion was the commencement of a new era of liberty and progress. They dwell upon the main principles proclaimed by the National Assembly as a glorious

emancipation from fetters which had enchained the human race up to that time, and they trace every advance which mankind has subsequently made, whether in art, science, government, or civilisation, to this source. They admit, indeed, that the Reign of Terror was a temporary paroxysm of national insanity—the misuse or the abuse of an unexpected and unaccustomed freedom ; but they assert that this effervescence once evaporated no such evil is likely to recur, and that nations were henceforward freed from the danger of similar catastrophes. Such were not the opinions of the first great opponent of the French Revolution, the greatest of all men whose burning eloquence still inspires Conservatism in every part of the world—Edmund Burke. He did not publish his immortal reflections on the French Revolution in 1792, but in 1790, when the first act of the drama had but just closed, and the great legislative and political changes had only been just consummated, and when the frightful atrocities of the Reign of Terror had not been perpetrated. He then denounced the French Revolution at its commencement as a false step, destroying, among some abuses, all that is venerable and precious in the past history of man, and replacing it by nothing but the germs of anarchy and ruin.

Which of the two opinions has been proved by experience, that only sure guide in political affairs ? The mild advocates of the French Revolution in its ultimate results told us that the Reign of Terror had passed away never to return—told us that Robespierre,

Danton, and Marat were madmen, whose delirious excesses could never again inflame a civilised people. Is such the case? What is the difference between the Committee of Public Safety and the Red Republic, which in June 1848 deluged Paris with blood, massacred the young Garde Mobile prisoners, assassinated General Brea while bearing a flag of truce to preach mercy and conciliation, and murdered an Archbishop of Paris while endeavouring to win them to the holy doctrines of forgiveness and peace? Was the spirit of that celebrated triumvirate extinct in Paris 20 years after in the chiefs of the Commune, who massacred innocent and unoffending men, including another Archbishop, whom they had seized under the name of hostages—when they killed the blameless Dominican Friars, or when they raised their hands to destroy all the most precious monuments of their own beautiful Paris, and sought in their madness to destroy that lovely city, the pride and glory of all Frenchmen? The history of France since 1830 abundantly demonstrates that Jacobinism, Red Republicanism, or Communism, call it by whatever name you please, is not a passing paroxysm of political frenzy, but a fanatical creed growing out of the pernicious dogmas of 1789, existing still in full force like some poisonous effluvium pent up in some smothered drain, and bursting forth whenever it can find an issue to scatter death and destruction in their ghastliest forms.

Policy of
Louis
Napoleon.

The revival of the Empire is an important era in the history, not only of France, but of Europe. It

is useless to disguise that, call it by what name you please, term it Césarisme, personal government—the revival of the Empire was a reverting to the old French form of government—an absolute monarchy. Napoleon I. and Napoleon III. were monarchs as absolute as ever was Louis XIV. The French nation had made trial of two Republics and two attempts at limited constitutional monarchy. They had broken into fragments all the institutions and all the usages of the former state of society. They had remapped their country into departments. They had blotted out the days of the week and the months of the year. They had abolished all titles, levelled all ranks, and proclaimed universal equality. They had tried every new scheme and listened to every new theory, and yet one by one they revert, as near as they can, to the old forms, and end in restoring monarchy under a new dynasty.

The new sovereign had for enemies all the partisans of each of these shipwrecked systems, but he was sustained by the army and by the great mass of the people. Instead of becoming weaker, his cause gained strength with time. The Emperor displayed a sagacity and statesmanlike wisdom for which few would have given him credit when known only as the hero of the Strasburg and Boulogne expeditions.

He began by carrying out that system which had been sketched in the pages of the newspaper 'Napoléon' and in the pamphlets on Césarisme, which had so frequently appeared during his presidency. That system consisted in the revival, as far as might

be, not only of the name, but of the policy of the first Napoleon. It was essentially mild and just, and the object of the third, like that of the first Napoleon, seemed to be to close the era of Revolutions and to unite all parties under his sceptre. The most active opponents of his elevation, who had been exiled at the time of the *coup d'état*, were suffered to return to France on taking an oath of allegiance to him. His two Chambers appeared framed very much upon the model of those of his uncle after the 18 Brumaire, and they exhibited but the shadow of parliamentary government. He established a system of control over the periodical press, which seemed perfectly effectual, without harshness or severity. If any journal transgressed the limits within which he would confine it, it received a caution, and if it again offended twice, it was at once suppressed. The journal itself, and not the editor or contributors, was the object of attack. There were no imprisonments or decrees of banishment ; all the penal part of the proceedings consisted in the loss attending the suppression of the journal. Yet this interdict even appeared sufficient for the purpose, for the newspapers were held in subjection. It must be observed that, when the assailants of the Napoleonic policy reproached it with enslaving the press, their censures applied only to the periodical or newspaper press. There never was a period when literary works of every description or shade of opinion were more free from government supervision than under the reign of Napoleon III. It was not against books, but against

newspapers that his measures of repression were levelled. The tide of thought might flow unchecked over the whole flood of literature, provided that the newspaper press was guarded against being converted into an agent of Revolution.

The government of the third, as well as of the first Napoleon, was frequently described by their opponents of all the different shades of Liberalism as military despotisms, but this term is inapplicable to them. There is scarce an instance during either of their reigns in which military force was employed, and when so employed was under the control of the civil power. The *état de siège*, or marshal law, was scarcely ever resorted to under either. It may occasion some surprise to those unacquainted practically with the state of France to be informed that since the year 1815 personal liberty was never so much respected as during the reign of Napoleon III. France has been always a police-governed country, and there never was a more vexatious interference with individual freedom than was created by the system of passports, which comprehended in its rigorous enactments not merely strangers but native Frenchmen. No one could leave his residence without a passport, which could be demanded of him by every gendarme he might meet, and the want of which might subject him to detention until his identity was ascertained. I well remember in my early French tours in the years 1816 and 1817, when travelling with my father, mother, and family, that wherever we took up our quarters for the night at the close of our

day's journey, we used to hear the clanking of sabres upon the stairs, which announced the arrival of two fierce-looking gendarmes in full uniform, who entered without the slightest attempt to salute us, and placing themselves in the middle of the room, demanded in a stern, authoritative tone, '*Monsieur, vos papiers.*' This requisition being complied with, and our passports carefully examined, our visitors stalked out of the room with the same rude demeanour. All France appeared to be governed by gendarmes and bureaucrats of different descriptions, very much as a school under a strict pedagogue. The first presumption with all these officials always appeared to be that every stranger was either a conspirator, an escaped convict, or a felon of some description flying from justice, and even the respectability and peaceful character of an English country gentleman travelling in a *berline* with his wife and family did not protect him from this inquisitorial process.

Now the whole of this harsh and oppressive system, which experience has shown to be utterly inefficacious either for the detection or repression of crime, was at once abolished by Napoleon III. His experience of England had taught him juster views. There was also a marked difference in the tone and manner of all *sergents de ville*, police agents, and government employés. A civil and obliging manner, resembling that generally found in the English metropolitan police, was substituted for the insolent and overbearing tone common to the whole tribe of French officials. These may seem to be small

matters, but such a marked change in the deportment of the agents of the servants of government indicated a great alteration in the temper and feeling of the government itself.

The great advances which Napoleon made towards the policy of free-trade—advances which were strongly opposed to the popular sentiment of the day—evinced the superiority of his views to those entertained by the majority of his countrymen. The impulse which this relaxation of the laws of protection imparted to French commerce afforded new proofs of the soundness of those principles which, from the time of Mr. Huskisson, had governed the policy of England. In this change the Emperor had to encounter the most serious opposition, and, probably, nothing less than his indomitable will could have carried the Anglo-French Treaty, negotiated by Mr. Cobden, to a successful conclusion.

The progress of France in commercial prosperity, the increase of her wealth, the internal tranquillity which she enjoyed, mark the reign of Napoleon III. in colours which favourably contrast with every other period of the ever-shifting panorama of French history since the year 1789. It is perfectly true that France did not enjoy a parliamentary government, but during the whole of these eighty years she has been trying experiments if parliamentary government is practicable at all in France. The reply of the Imperialists to the accusation that they destroy free constitutional government in France was, that it had never been established there; that

no one of the many forms which had successively been tried since 1789 had acquired the least permanence; that France, in reverting to her old monarchical system, returned to that form of government which was identified with all the previous habits, customs, and traditions of the nation; and that the fact of her adoption of the old system had been accompanied by a term of national prosperity, political security, and material progress, which had been sought for in vain under the former attempts of constitutional government, confirms the opinion that these last were not suited to the genius of the people or to the existing state of society.

It is perfectly true that certain dogmas had come to be established in France, not because their soundness had been practically demonstrated by experiment, but just the contrary, because they had been constantly disproved. During the twenty years of Napoleon's rule France was happy, prosperous, and tranquil, and extraordinarily progressive in wealth and in every branch of commercial and material prosperity; but it is equally true that these advantages were purchased by the tacit abandonment of all those principles of 1789, which Frenchmen had been taught to regard as the natural charter of freedom. The Imperialists always maintain that a constitutional monarchy is an artificial, and not a natural form of government, and that it could only exist under conditions which were wanting in France.

Charges of
luxury and

There were certain elements of weakness in the

Second Empire, partly growing out of its own origin and partly inseparable from the nature of a society which had been so shaken by the successive storms of revolution which had swept over it, that there was no natural cohesion left. It is an invariable law of political revolutions that the government which has been last upset by some popular outbreak is overwhelmed with every species of accusation. The Second Empire is charged with luxury, profligacy, corruption, in addition to the grave mistakes which it made in the Mexican and in the German wars. These attacks there is no one to reply to, or to defend the fallen dynasty, and therefore we must receive all such bills of indictment with great reservation. It is, however, worthy of remark that tyranny, oppression, and arbitrary conduct are not found generally in the lists of these charges. Personal liberty, the security of property, and the rights of individuals were at least as safe, and perhaps safer, under the Second Empire than at any previous period of modern French history. The attacks made against the Imperial *régime* for its general luxury and corruption will not appear to be sustained by facts to any persons acquainted with French society. Nothing is more readily accepted by the masses than these vague wholesale charges of luxury and extravagance brought against the wealthier classes. We must first be told whether they are intended to comprehend all that portion of society whose incomes enable them to indulge in superfluities, or whether the charges are preferred

corruption
brought
against the
Empire.

against the ministers, the officials, and what we call the staff of the Imperial dynasty alone.

1st. Increase of luxury in private life.

Now, with respect to the first of these, it is necessary, and not only necessary but very desirable, that as a country grows in wealth, and a greater number of persons are in easy circumstances, that more is expended in the purchase of those enjoyments which wealth commands. If all those who were growing richer practised a rigid economy, and spent no part of their increasing means upon the gratification of their various tastes, such a community would be a nation of misers. Such a state of things would be fraught with evil. Money is not meant to be hoarded but to be spent, and its circulation among a community benefits not merely the capitalist but the whole population. The shopkeeper, the artisan, the manufacturer, the class of domestic servants—all those who live by labour are benefited by its employment, and no charge could be more baseless and unsubstantial than one against the French proprietors for unreasonable luxury in their mode of living. No doubt the increase of fortunes in number and amount, which the prosperous state of France led to, was marked by a considerable addition to the conveniences and luxuries of private life; but this result is exactly that which every sound political economist would have anticipated and would have regarded as an unmixed benefit to the community. The French people are rather disposed to frugality and economy than to lavish expenditure.

One of the great objects of the Revolution of 1789

was to prevent the accumulation of large fortunes, and it has been perfectly successful in this mistaken policy of restriction. Large incomes, such as are scattered in England among all ranks, are very rare and exceptional in France, and the tastes and desires of a Frenchman consequently lead him more to the indulgence of his personal desires than to any large and profuse general expenditure. The whole system of society lends itself to these views. The luxury of a wealthy Englishman shows itself in a handsome town residence, and still more in a country mansion, replete with all the luxuries which can satisfy his many tastes—beautiful ornamental gardens, extensive hothouses and conservatories, home farms cultivated without much regard to profit, but with a great attention to the production of the finest animals, estates well stocked with game, studs of hunters in the stables, yachts conveying their proprietors to every accessible coast. These may be termed luxuries in the larger sense of the word, and these luxuries are so far from being injurious to the rest of the community, that if they do not go to the extent of inducing the proprietor to ruin himself, if they are only indulged in so far as the limits of his income will allow him, they are eminently beneficial to the whole community.

But expenditure on this scale finds no parallel in France, where, indeed, except in some few exceptional cases, their fortunes would not admit of it. In that country they have neither the princely ancestral domains of the Dukes of Sutherland or Northumber-

land, or of the Marquises of Bute or Westminster, nor have they the colossal fortunes recently amassed by Messrs. Crawshay, Bailey, Guest, or Baird in the iron trade; by Sir Francis Crossley or Titus Salt in the manufacturing districts, or the stupendous fortune, approaching £10,000,000 sterling, bequeathed by Mr. Brassey. These and similar great proprietors may have the power and inclination to graft upon English social life luxuries upon a scale unknown to former generations. In doing so, so long as their vast revenues are expended with taste and judgment and exercised under a certain sense of moral responsibility, which devolves upon the possessors of such enormous financial resources, Englishmen believe them to be a blessing to the community. But there are no such aggregations of wealth in France. Everything in that country is calculated to combine personal ease and enjoyment with economical expenditure. If we turn to the stately mansions in Paris, we find that none of them are tenanted by a Duke of Sutherland or a Mr. Holford; that they are divided into suites of apartments, like chambers in the Albany or flats in Victoria Street, each of which may be occupied by a moderate-sized family, with perhaps three or four servants, male and female. If the occupier of one of these apartments becomes wealthier from any source, he does not, as an Englishman probably would, migrate to some other locality, or increase the scale of his establishment. He goes more frequently to the spectacle, indulges himself and his wife with a box at the

opera or one of the great theatres, treats himself to a *recherché* dinner at the *Café Anglais* or the *Maison d'Or*, and perhaps engages a better cook and gives a few small dinners to his friends. If he has not previously been able to afford it, he sets up a neat brougham, with a showy pair of horses, and perhaps he may treat himself to a saddle horse. His wife will put in her claim for a large share of the additional income, to enable her to shine among her acquaintances in new and brilliant toiles. Very few of the residents of Paris possess country houses, and where they do they go there to vegetate for three or four months in a private and unostentatious fashion. Most likely, during the prosperous reign of Napoleon III., a considerably greater number of individuals were enabled to indulge in the gratification of their tastes to this extent, and that they should do so was a great benefit conferred on France; and none but some crazy Communist could cast an imputation upon the Empire because it had called into existence a large number of proprietors able to share to this modest extent in the comforts of affluence and the elegancies of life.

It is very necessary to bear in mind the important distinction which must obviously exist between these imputations of luxury and effeminacy increasing throughout the whole of the upper classes in France, and of corruption fostered among the officials of the Imperial government. Charges of a similar kind are always made wholesale in France by the new occupants of the places in Government held by their

2nd. Corruption prevalent among the immediate adherents of the Empire.

displaced predecessors. In 1789 it was the noblesse and the country gentlemen—that important class by whom mental cultivation, refined tastes, and a higher civilisation were disseminated among the rural districts of France—who were driven forth, never to be replaced. In the early days of the Revolution it was Mirabeau, the aristocratic demagogue, who indulged in all the luxuries of sensuality. During the Reign of Terror it was Danton, his coarser imitator, who indulged in every species of costly libertinism, till his career was cut short by his more ascetic rival Robespierre. During the reign of the Directory, official corruption and prodigality of every sort reached a pitch which has never probably been attained since. It required all the stern energy of the first Napoleon to stem the torrent of venality, and to introduce something like regularity into the public expenditure. We must always view with suspicion and accept with reserve such accusations; they are seldom proved when those who are able to confute them are gone, and their successors rejoice to make easy capital out of them. It is quite possible that the servants of government in the various departments may have found irregular methods of adding to their salaries. It was one of the misfortunes of such a series of revolutions as France has passed through that they deeply demoralise all classes, and the high sense of honour and integrity of principle, which, in a country like our own, become the precious heritage of official men, are weakened or lost; but I should very much doubt whether these

evils were particularly prevalent during the reign of Napoleon III. The case of M. Teste may serve to demonstrate that they existed during the days of the Citizen King. We must remember that the administration of the public money under Napoleon III. was splendidly liberal in the encouragement of all works of public utility. The public is beginning to do a tardy justice to M. de Haussmann for the noble works by which he so embellished Paris, and made her the most beautiful city in the world. It is not very easy to draw the line between extravagance and a wise expenditure; but we must remember that whether in the capital, at the ports, or in any part of France, the twenty years of Napoleon's reign have left records of their time in numberless permanent works of public utility, not less than in beauty and embellishment.

It is worthy of notice that, during the first few years of Napoleon's reign, the principles of Imperialism pure and simple were avowed and acted upon, and that they were the most prosperous and tranquil of his reign. We do not know under what pressure or from what system of what is called timely concession the firm hand with which he had curbed popular license at the beginning of his reign became gradually relaxed. Modifications were introduced relating to the laws regarding public journals. The writers in them were not slow to avail themselves of this partial emancipation from restraint, and the old strains of opposition soon began to appear in their columns. It is sometimes

thought that the Emperor himself, who in early life had been rather liberal in politics, had formed the idea of gradually educating the French nation to the enjoyment of political and constitutional freedom. Certainly during the latter years of his reign he departed very widely from the principles which his most trusted adherents had advocated at its commencement. There were certain elements of weakness in the apparently firm edifice of the Empire which this sagacious sovereign must have recognised. He was the heir of his uncle, and it was by the magic of that name, still worshipped by millions of Frenchmen, that he had ascended the throne; and in the eyes of a great portion of the nation it appeared to them almost like the exile of St. Helena restored to life and to France.

Napoleon's
military
policy a
necessity
of his
position.

It became incumbent on him, however, to maintain the character with which he was thus invested, and it was a difficult and delicate task to satisfy the aspirations of his ambitious countrymen without raising a storm which might have been at once fatal to him. Although, as I have already pointed out, his government was a government of law and order, and not a military despotism, yet that in its ultimate resort his throne must rely upon the support of the army. That army, consisting of half a million of men, could not be kept in permanent inactivity without breeding a spirit of discontent and insubordination dangerous to the Empire. Louis Napoleon was then almost forced to find occasions for the employment of this vast host. The

first which offered was a most fortunate and auspicious one. The Emperor Nicholas, in an evil hour, suddenly abandoned that policy which had been bequeathed to him by his brother the Emperor Alexander, of abstaining from all attempts at foreign conquest in conjunction with Austria and Prussia, the two other great powers of Eastern Europe. This policy had maintained public tranquillity for forty years. It had been adhered to by the Emperor Alexander under the temptation of the Greek Rebellion, and it had everywhere enabled the allied sovereigns to suppress revolution. The Emperor Nicholas was the first to violate this pact by an attack on Turkey, which he conceived to be in the last stage of decay.

Such an attempt alarmed all Europe. It dissolved the alliance between Austria and Prussia. It roused the dormant spirit of the English people, and it afforded to Napoleon an opportunity of, in some sort, avenging the retreat from Moscow and the entry of the Cossacks into France. It afforded him, in addition, the means of cementing that cordial alliance with England which, throughout his reign, was a cornerstone of his policy. It was not only happy in its conception, but eminently successful in its results. The Russian attempt upon Turkey was completely repulsed, the conquest of her great southern arsenal inflicted a blow upon her military and naval power, and a lasting friendship was cemented with England, the greatest of his uncle's enemies.

His second important war was that with Austria, in

1859. It was more brilliant even than the contest with Russia in the Crimea, inasmuch as it was not waged in a remote corner of Europe, nor confined to the siege of a great fortress. It was a regular campaign in one of the old battle-fields of Europe, and was carried on by the whole forces of the two Empires. The French army was commanded by Napoleon himself in person. It ended in two complete and glorious victories, and its history might bear no disadvantageous comparison with the victories of Montenotte, Lodi, or Marengo. Yet, perhaps, its policy was more doubtful and its ultimate consequences less fortunate for France than was the Russian war. To enfeeble Austria was not to strengthen France. Subsequent events have clearly shown that, whether as a bulwark against Russia, or as a balance to the preponderating weight of Prussia in Germany, the interests of the French Empire were involved in the maintenance of Austrian power; nor were the immediate results in the formation of the United Italian Kingdom very clearly a benefit to France. It may be surmised, indeed, that this result was not anticipated by Napoleon, who, if he acquiesced, by no means actually favoured it. He may have thought that the existence of the different small States into which Italy was subdivided was favourable to the maintenance of a preponderating French influence, and that the formation of a powerful independent State on her south-eastern frontier, commanding so influential a position in the Mediterranean, was a doubtful advantage.

Still more unfortunate is his third great foreign enterprise — the Mexican Expedition. His two European wars, although the political results of the latter may be questioned, were brilliant military successes. They added to the laurels of the army, and they revived to a certain degree in favour of the nephew the prestige which still cast its halo around the mighty name of the first Napoleon. But the Mexican Expedition was a failure, and of all nations the French are the most intolerant of failure. Its real objects were never fully developed, and perhaps the Emperor himself may not have been unwilling to leave them in obscurity. Had the Southern States of the American Union succeeded in establishing their independence, a very different train of consequences might have followed, but the Northern conquerors were not likely to tolerate the establishment of a monarchy so near their frontiers, and the Emperor Napoleon could not venture to prosecute the scheme for the establishment of a Latin Empire.

Incipient
causes of
weakness
in the
Empire.

Up to this period France had advanced with gigantic strides ever since the establishment of the Empire. No element of national prosperity and greatness was wanting. The partial adoption of free-trade, first with England and subsequently with other Powers, had been attended with a rapid development of all her resources, and a vast increase to her commercial and manufacturing prosperity. Every branch of industry was thriving. Perfect tranquillity at home had succeeded to all the political agitations which had shaken France during the reigns of the elder

Bourbons and of King Louis Philippe. Public works, both of utility and ornament, had been completed. Her foreign relations were not less fortunate and satisfactory. France had regained a position among the European States which she had not occupied since the fall of the first Napoleon. The wise alliance with England had greatly strengthened her position, and as a naval power she had much improved her strength, and held a rank little inferior to that of England herself. It could scarcely be anticipated that in a few short years this great power, built up with so much wisdom and policy, would have been prostrated to the ground. The commencement of her decline was the partial modification of those principles of Césarisme upon which the Emperor had acted at the commencement of his reign. Whether yielding to some internal pressure, or carried away by the idea of gradually training the French nation to fit them for a constitutional monarchy, he made many approaches towards that *régime*. He relaxed the laws against the journals, and soon found himself the object of attack from many of them. His Mexican failures afforded a ground of attack in the Chambers, and though he possessed an overwhelming majority in both, yet there were to be found in them some able orators who criticised his measures with severity and attacked his government with unremitting hostility.

Another cause, the precise nature or extent of which is not exactly known, arose in the partial failure of his health during a portion of this period.

His uncle somewhere observed in his conversations at St. Helena, with reference to the want of vigour evinced by one of his marshals, '*On n'est pas toujours propre à la guerre,*' and the remark applies equally to the struggles of politics and statesmanship, which make quite as heavy demands upon the nerves and brain as the rudest campaign. From all these causes a sensible modification of the vigorous policy he adopted at the commencement of his reign is easily traced. After the last elections, although he still retained an overwhelming numerical majority in the Chambers, yet an opposition, small in numbers, but formidable from its talent, energy, and irreconcilable hostility to Imperialism, sprang into existence.

There was another grave symptom of approaching danger apparent in the elections. Out of the bulk of the army, which we may roughly estimate at half a million, about 50,000 votes were recorded for Opposition candidates, and so serious a defection inspired a doubt whether this great bulwark of the Imperial government could, under all circumstances, safely be relied upon.

Another cause had arisen from the death of some of his most trusted councillors. Marshal Niel was a heavy loss to him, as under his able and experienced direction all the deficiencies and defalcations of the disastrous campaign of 1870 would have been remedied, or the disorganised state of the army would at least have been made known.

These various considerations operated probably to decide the Emperor, against the advice of the ablest

The Emperor is driven into

the Prussian War by the feeling of the French people.

of his Imperial councillors, to surrender what was undoubtedly the principle of his system—the administration of public affairs by his personal rule. This concession was probably considered at the time as more apparent than real. The great influence of the Imperial Government, both in the Chambers and in all the departments of the State; the control of the army, which still continued to look up to Napoleon as its natural chief; and the eager desire of almost all the political leaders to win the distinction of official rank, even by bartering their independence—all this left a great part of real power still in the hands of the Emperor, but he probably felt that this disintegrating and dissolving element was fairly introduced into his government. He very likely remembered the remark of his uncle, '*Ces idéologues seroit capables de dissoudre un empire de granite.*' I fancy that much of his subsequent policy, which proved in the end so calamitous to himself and to France, may be attributable to these causes. One of the strongest desires of his soul was the wish to perpetuate his dynasty, and to transmit the noble inheritance of the Empire to his son. A mind so far-seeing as was his must have anticipated no secure inheritance could be transmitted to his posterity, even if his own firmness and skill enabled him to retain the Imperial crown during his life. It had always been anticipated that, although his probable inclinations led him rather to the adoption of a pacific policy, yet that a period would in all probability eventually arise when he could only retain the sceptre by

emulating the military achievements of his mighty uncle. That was a card in his hand, an arrow in his quiver, which it was felt he would retain to the end, and only play it till the last extremity. That time had now arrived. The rapid growth of Prussian power had already changed the whole surface of Europe. First Denmark, then the minor States of Germany, and, lastly, Austria herself at Sadowa, yielded to the weight of this new influence in Europe. Napoleon I. himself, in the full tide of conquest, had not swept over Europe with a more resistless tide. France must endure to be eclipsed, or must make some desperate effort to regain her ascendancy. The crisis was felt and understood, not only by the Emperor himself, but by the whole nation. The French people were excited to the highest pitch; all the recollections of their former triumphs at Jena, and of the revenge so bitterly exacted by the Prussians in 1814 and 1815, were revived in their memory. Their national animosity was rekindled to a white heat. All the natural presumption of the French military character was awakened. It has been asserted that this burst of hostility and warlike fever was only superficial, was confined to the young, and that war was unpopular with the mass of the French nation. Such may be the case. Such, I think, is the opinion of M. Ernest Renard in his late work. Yet in all nations, and particularly the French, it is not the inert majority who govern; it is the active, young, ambitious minority. Very possibly the peasant proprietors of the rural districts might have been supremely

indifferent to the victory at Sadowa, but such was not the feeling either of the army or of the restless populations of Paris and Lyons. Had Napoleon been content to abdicate the military supremacy of Europe, and to surrender it into the hands of Count Bismarck, there would not have been wanting clever demagogues to denounce him as the betrayer of his country. His authority had already received a rude shock by the substitution of ministerial for personal rule. It would scarcely have withstood the storm of unpopularity with which it would have been assailed, if he could have been reproached with having succumbed under the ascendancy of the rising star of Prussia.

The old
fires of
Jacobin-
ism re-
kindled in
the midst
of their
country's
disasters

I will not attempt to follow the course of events during that disastrous campaign which crushed the military strength of France and overthrew the throne of Napoleon. The details of the triumphant success of the Prussian arms are fresh in every one's memory, but there are some points connected with the consequences which these events occasioned to the state of Parties in France which strengthen those conclusions which it has been the main object of this work to enforce. The first result of the reverses of the French arms on the frontier was a new Revolution effected at Paris, strictly according to the old pattern, which had been so frequently worked there. There was a government which had been strong but yesterday, there was a Parliament elected by universal suffrage, but when the crushing disaster of Sedan befell the Imperial arms all this vanished like

a meteor. An *émeute* was got up in Paris ; the Chambers were stormed and scattered by a mob, just as those in February 1848 had been driven out by the mob of that day ; the official protectors of the regency disappeared and the Empress was a fugitive, just as Louis Philippe had fled in February 1848, after having, like the Duchess of Orleans, vainly tried to rally her adherents to the defence of her cause. It would really seem that, in these moments of civil and political crises, it is the women alone who exhibit courage. The facility with which each government is in turn overset, and the readiness with which the mass of the nation accepts whatever new government is dictated by the revolutionary mobs of Paris, is one of the most fatal and discouraging symptoms in the decline of the French national existence.

Another conclusion to be deduced from these later events is one which I have been throughout this work endeavouring to establish, viz. the identity in spirit of all the Revolutions during the long period of eighty-three years with that first outbreak of democratic violence in 1789 ; and every succeeding eruption has shown the same features, has always led to anarchy, and ended in absolute power. The ferocious sect of Jacobins, Red Republicans or Communists are always the same, and after eighty years are as resolutely confident in the ultimate triumph of their principles as they could have been in the days of Danton or Robespierre. Even while Prussian hosts were beleaguering Paris—when her patriotism; one would have thought, would have united all parties in common

resistance to the invader, these turbulent spirits got up a new disturbance, seized General Trochu, and were within an ace of accomplishing a new Revolution in the very midst of all the dangers which then menaced the capital of France. They are always the same—a truth it needed not the last attempt of the Commune to convince us. It must be owned that this delirious outbreak of democratic violence exceeds all that the previous history of Jacobinism could offer. Their beloved France was in the grasp of the conqueror. Its existence as a nation almost depended upon his will. Their armies had been scattered throughout France, utterly vanquished. The power of resisting the Prussian hosts no longer existed, and yet at this time it burst out in a new storm of revolutionary fury; and under the very eyes of their victorious enemies they carried on a most terrible and ferocious civil war. This was the moment they must select to carry into practice their insane theories against all difference of classes, all property, and all religion. Under the very eyes of the Prussians, who had only to look calmly on and to watch them rending each other, they murdered their Archbishop and many other innocent and unoffending citizens. They burnt their noblest edifices, and were only prevented by military force from laying their beautiful city in ruins. Where can we find in the annals of Europe a parallel to this act of criminal insanity?

Revolution
quenched
in blood.

— This last Communist revolt has been the most violent and anarchical of all the wild outbursts of revolutionary frenzy which have stained the annals

of France in modern times. It has been suppressed by the only effectual means which have ever been found capable of subduing it—the unsparing and unscrupulous employment of military force. Measures were adopted, the severity of which would have roused a chorus of indignation only a year or two before. Martial law, or rather the uncontrolled authority of the military powers, reigned supreme throughout Paris. The vanquished Communists were allowed none of the privileges accorded to the conquered by the laws of war. They were shot by thousands, without the form of a trial. No grace or favour was extended to women in this terrible chastisement; hundreds of them were executed in the plains of Satory or elsewhere without pity or mercy. They seem, indeed, to have merited this rigour by the exceptional ferocity and cruelty which marked their acts. They not only fought with desperate courage on the barricades, but they were accused of constantly murdering prisoners in cold blood, and of being among the principal agents of the incendiary acts by which it was sought to reduce Paris to ashes.

It is curious to remark how the wild theories of ultra-democracy always bring about their own refutation. The extreme Liberals of the day have everywhere been preaching for the abolition of capital punishment. They have, above all, been appealing to the feelings of humanity and tenderness for the sex on behalf of female criminals. Does a woman poison a whole family, or two or three families; does

she sacrifice innocent children to some machination ; does she murder and afterwards rob her mistress with every accompaniment of brutal violence—than the sympathies of the public are directly appealed to in strains of mawkish sentimentality, and her execution is commuted for a confinement, in which, as a reputed madwoman, she enjoys most of the comforts of life. But how soon all this pseudo-philanthropy breaks down under the exigencies of real revolution. Where were the appeals from benevolent societies ? Where were the petitions in favour of the condemned ? What voice was raised to stay the arm of the avenger, or to avert the weapons of the deadly platoon of rifles, when all the passions of civil war were fairly roused ? We shall never know what it is the interest of all parties to conceal—how many of the criminals, male and female, implicated in the atrocities of the Commune, fell by military execution ; but it seems undoubted that they were to be numbered not by hundreds, but by thousands, largely exceeding probably the number of the slain in many a well-fought field of honourable warfare.

Provi-
sional state
of affairs
in France.

The object of this review is not to write a detailed history of France, but to establish certain conclusions by reference to the experience of the past. I will not, therefore, dwell at any length upon the course of events since the suppression of the revolt of the Commune, nor give more than a passing glance at the prospects of unhappy France. Nations are often governed or hoodwinked by words, and the state of abeyance in which France is placed is dignified with

the name of a Republic, although it would be difficult to define under what form of government the French nation is at present ruled. Everything is confessedly provisional, and the country is looking forward, through the dim haze which envelopes her future destinies, to the vision of a new Constituent Assembly. How often have we heard that term 'Constituent' Assembly pronounced during the last three-quarters of a century. But every Constitution has been so ephemeral that the expression has lost all the weight and authority which it might once have possessed. France is now living under no Constitution at all. She is promised one in the future, which is to constitute something which may last twenty years, and may be as perishable as the paper it is written upon. In the meantime, she is supposed to be living under the rule of the Republic—a Republic proclaimed by a riotous Parisian mob, which seized on the government on September 4, 1870. Most of the would-be founders of that Republic have been again lost in the obscurity from which they momentarily emerged. The Assembly, which was convoked amidst the storms of foreign invasion, has never been able to establish the principles held by a large majority of its members, and the dexterity of M. Thiers has enabled him hitherto to maintain a power resting upon no solid basis, but, while it lasts, as much a personal and absolute rule as was ever that of the Emperor Napoleon, which was ratified by seven millions of votes. If one were inclined to hazard a conjecture where all is so uncertain, it would be

Uncertainty of the future.

either that some foreign complication would again bring the invading hosts of the Germans upon the wretched people of France, or that civil anarchy will once more be terminated by the intervention of military force.

History has been defined to be Philosophy teaching by example. What are the lessons which the history of this long drama of French Revolution, extended over more than eighty years, teaches us? At its commencement it was hailed by many generous and enthusiastic minds as a new era of liberty and progress. Civilisation was to take a fresh stride in advance of all which had hitherto been accomplished. Mankind, and particularly the French nation, were to be more free, more prosperous, enlightened, and happy than they had ever previously been. Society was to be entirely remodelled upon a novel and enlarged basis, extending to all advantages hitherto confined to a few. Old institutions, rotten with age and corrupt with evil influences, were to be swept away. The genius of an enlightened era, warned by past errors and mistakes, was to construct a new and perfect model, under which all mankind were to be wiser, happier, freer than they had ever been in any previous period.

Now all this did not seem so absurd in 1789 as it does now to all thinking minds. The Utopias which danced before the eyes of political philosophers had never yet been tested by experiment. They were full of attraction to young and ardent minds. They embodied creations of the beautiful and the good

which enlisted many of our better sympathies. They proclaimed a crusade against all the evils of misgovernment that had ever existed, which they proposed to replace by a rule of philanthropy and universal benevolence. Men of great talent advocated these doctrines with impassioned eloquence. They intoxicated the reason of the people, and although many great and wise men—in the foremost rank of whom the great name of Edmund Burke must ever stand—denounced their danger and their hollowness, yet whole nations, and particularly the French, were entirely carried away by them.

Certain principles were laid down as the foundation of all this superstructure, among the first of which were the equality of mankind and the sovereignty of the people. In other words, they proclaimed a pure democracy as the only true form of government suited to mankind. As they adopted new principles as the foundation of all human society, it logically followed that all the bases upon which the older civilisations rested were to be entirely swept away. Everything which had previously existed, all which had been the growth of time, was to be destroyed, and the first axiom of the new philosophy was that all previous organisations of society proceeded upon principles wholly false, and that the fabric of human civilisation was to be reared again from the ground according to a totally novel plan. One of the great aims of the first French Revolution was to sever all connection with the past, to repudiate all former systems of law, forms of government

Two great principles are the root of all French philosophy of the 18th century.

or modes of religious faith, as utterly erroneous—as the mere nursery tales which had amused or deceived man in his infancy.

The two principles with which the philosophers of 1789 set out—viz. the universal equality of man and the sovereignty of the people—necessarily led to the entire razing to the ground all existing institutions; that everything that man had created had proceeded from the instinctive and unconscious adoption of totally different principles. The philosophy of the French Revolution was not an inductive one; it never deduced its conclusions from a reference to past experience. It laid down certain principles, the truth of which it assumed, and proceeded to act upon them.

X
1st The
natural
equality
of man-
kind.

Now the first of these principles, from which the Revolution deduced all its conclusions, was one in direct contradiction to all known facts, to everything which history teaches us, and to the universal experience of mankind. It is the assertion of the natural equality of mankind. The exact reverse of this position is the true one. Man is born unequal, men come into the world in a state of nature very unequal, and the whole tendency of progress and civilisation is to increase that inequality. Let each of us, even in the narrow limits of our own personal experience, make choice at will of any numerous family. The children of the same parents, the same social condition, the same education, the same chances in life, and yet their characters and capacities, their physical and moral qualities, will be

widely different. Some will be dull of comprehension, others quick and clever. Some will be incorrigibly idle, others industrious and persevering. Some will exhibit a peculiar aptitude for some particular branch of study, which will be not in the least shared in by any of the others. Some will have healthy, vigorous constitutions, others will come into the world with the seeds of disease. The variety of mere physical attributes is endless. Not only are strength and weakness, beauty and deformity, distributed in every different degree, but there is an endless diversity in the character and type of these endowments. The physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of individuals constitute what may be considered as the capital with which Nature furnishes them with which to wage the battle of life. It is quite false to assert that all men are born equal when such wide differences are found to exist from their very infancy; differences which are inherent in them, and which will inevitably become more marked as each individual arrives at maturity, and will grow in rapidly increasing ratio with every succeeding generation. This first canon of democracy places it in opposition to the whole natural progress of human society. Any attempt to enforce equality against the natural law of inequality which pervades all human society will lead, perforce, into a violent counteraction of our natural tendencies, and these must lead to an arbitrary interference with the natural course of human events, and to a state of things which would combine despotism with anarchy. The

favourite axiom of M. Proudhon, 'that all property is theft,' is a logical deduction from this principle, for nothing can be so unequal in itself, or lead to such wide inequality in the conditions of men, as the existence of the right of property.

What prodigious inequality presents itself in the intellectual powers and gifts of different individuals. The disciples of equality always contend that these great differences are traceable entirely to circumstances and to education. They constantly seek to overrate the influence of education, and find in the existing differences and culture a sufficient reason for all the disparities which meet our eyes. It is only necessary to follow out their consequences in order to be sensible of their utter absurdity. The *reductio ad absurdum* is a killing test. Could any amount of training, any exercise of the faculties, have produced a Newton out of an ordinary individual or out of a million of ordinary individuals? The gifts of genius are as rare as the endowments of pure intellect. More than 2,000 years have elapsed, yet the works of Phidias and Praxiteles remain without a rival. Where shall we find, among the hundreds of pictures which annually line the walls in the great European exhibitions of painting, one production which approaches the great masterpieces of Raphael or Dominichino? There are tens of millions throughout Europe alone to whom the possession of a fine voice would give riches and fame; but how long may we again wait before we hear the perfection of dramatic art and vocal melody combined in another Grisi?

If we place these principles clearly and nakedly before our eyes in all their simplicity, we shall soon see their monstrous absurdity; but if we read the works of Victor Hugo, or any other of the disciples of this school, we may not at first trace the fallacy which lurks under all their ingenious fictions. Let us take 'Les Misérables,' for instance, which seems to argue that all the laws enacted for the protection of property and the repression of crime are the very causes of crime; and that, if men were left to their own unrestrained instincts and passions, they would be virtuous, amiable, benevolent, and humane.

We must remember also that the differences and distinctions between men are not alone confined to individuals. In all civilised communities which we have ever known, and of which we can form any idea, differences of condition are not confined to individuals; they descend to their children. The almost universal object of men, and still more of women, is to leave to their offspring the same amount of physical and material well-being that they have either inherited or obtained in their battle with life; and the inevitable tendency in such a constant endeavour is to create classes. The words Civilisation and Progress, if they mean anything, mean the constant prosecution of these aims. Men, as they grow more wealthy, become more refined. It is not merely the hands of those born to the enjoyment of affluence which differ from those of the hard-working labourer or mechanic; their minds acquire a corresponding degree of delicacy and

polish. In a healthy and natural state of society, where the feelings are not perverted by the jealousy and envy engendered by democracy, the superior mental and moral cultivation extends its influence to lower strata in civilised communities, and in a lesser degree elevates and humanises the whole. It is in vain that the fanatics of democracy struggle against these inevitable tendencies in human nature. The violent attempt to root them out leads immediately to the frightful anarchy of Jacobinism. If the equality of mankind be accepted as a desirable end, it must be enforced, or some approximation to it must be approached, by the most despotic laws, interfering with that very human progress which all the philosophers of this school affect to cherish. Leave society alone, reserve the laws of property and maintain that framework which has always existed in all communities of men, and inequalities will certainly increase and multiply. These inequalities will not work by conferring superior comforts and blessings upon a small number at the expense of the population. All will be benefited in a greater or less degree, but some will enjoy the blessings of life in a larger proportion than others.

2nd. The
sovereignty of
the people.

The dogma of the sovereignty of the people has obtained, perhaps, a more general acceptance than the doctrine of the natural equality of man. This last theory is contradicted by plain and patent facts, by every man's experience, and by common sense. Even the least educated and cultivated minds can

perceive its absurdity, as my old waggoner, whom I quoted in a previous passage with the remark, 'If you made all men equal in the morning, they would be unequal by night,' could testify.

The theory of the sovereignty of the people is of a more abstract and metaphysical nature. It assumes the character of a great political and philosophical theorem, and its fallacy is less obvious. It originated, I believe, in the wild and distempered brain of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the apostle of democracy in the last century. This extraordinary man was gifted with a wonderful natural eloquence and acute sympathies for his fellow-creatures. His ingenious imagination was just of that order which fashions to itself specious though baseless systems, which always aims to create new theories, and which disdains to submit to the trammels of experience. But no man ever existed less calculated to prove a safe guide in any of the higher departments of philosophy, science, and morals. The *contrât social* is the text-book of this theory of the sovereignty of the people. It was adopted *en masse* by the zealots of 1789, and having then received the stamp of orthodoxy, it has passed unquestioned among all the subsequent disciples of the new political faith.

'The sovereignty of the people is the sole legitimate source of political power. All government must spring from it, and all authority not derived directly from it is a usurpation of the rights of man.' I have never clearly understood whether this proposition means the assertion of a fact or the establish-

ment of a new rule of political faith. Is it meant that the sovereignty of the people is, or that it ought to be, the source from which all political power is derived? The question is a very important one, because it goes to the root of many of the differences which, up to the present day, divide mankind. Are the great problems of government and social order to be solved according to the abstract theories fashioned by speculative philosophers? Is it human nature, such as history and experience tell us it is, which is to be subject-matter with which we have to deal, or is it that improved human nature which we think we can fabricate on an entirely novel adaptation of the old materials? Are we to frame our conclusions upon man as he is or as he is not? Now, as a matter of fact, I deny that government has ever sprung from the direct action of the will of a nation or from any form or declaration of it. Where can the philosophers of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau school point to a single instance in the whole history of our race, in which a government has been formed *ab initio* by any reference to the collective will of the whole mass of the people at any time? The most popular forms are no exception to this rule; for, even where the democratic principle is most largely introduced, it has never been the origin of government. Government springs from a totally different cause, and a very natural and obvious one to all those who consult human nature, either as it is or as it always has been. Government in some shape or other is neces-

sary to the existence of human society. It is as impossible for society to exist without government as it is for life to be preserved without food or without air. No community of men ever yet dreamed of consulting the will of the whole before they constituted a government, for long before the will of the whole could have been reached society would have been dissolved. The process by which government is first introduced in the early stages of society is not difficult to trace, and has nothing whatever to do with any collective manifestation of the will of a people.

A tribe of savages finds that, if there is no one to command or to direct it, the whole machinery of life falls into confusion. The strongest, the boldest, and the most intelligent among them naturally takes a lead. Is it a hunting party to be organised, or a draught of fishes to be caught, he jumps to the foreground and gives the necessary orders to direct the expedition. The less energetic and intelligent spirits instinctively submit to his ascendancy, for they feel that it is their best chance for catching the fish or killing the game, or avoiding being eaten up by the wild beasts. His superiority is silently felt and acknowledged. Perhaps his ascendancy is disputed—some rival leader contests the palm with him, and then, probably, either the one or the other has his brains knocked out by his competitor; the rest of the savages look on, and are most likely disposed to render a still more willing obedience to the victor, for all savages reverence and admire force. This is

the first step towards the establishment of a government. No one of the savages ever dreams of elevating this leader to supremacy by a formal and collective vote, but he obeys partly from the influence of fear and partly from the sense that he himself cannot command, and that, unless some one commands, the wants and necessities of the little community will not be provided for; but he obeys and yields to the ascendancy of a stronger nature. The authority thus acquired is perpetuated in the individual chief or his family, and obedience becomes gradually a habit; a race of these leaders is in a few generations created, and among the chiefs one very likely asserts an indisputable pre-eminence and becomes a king. Such is the process by which government is first formed in all uncivilised or half-civilised races of men. Submission to a superior is never a voluntary act—is never the result of any co-operation of the reason or the will by which an individual surrenders a certain portion of his liberty of action into the hands of responsible and accountable agents. We might as well contend that a hive of bees make a voluntary cession of their liberty to their queen, and that the real right of sovereignty lies in the collective mass of the bees. Societies and communities thus formed, if of the same race, are gradually grouped together, the weaker are absorbed into the stronger, and they are welded into a nation. The progress of civilisation acquires laws, divides the nation into various classes, and it becomes perhaps a mighty people. The machinery of laws, the rights

of property are gradually evolved out of the necessities and wants of the community, but the force to carry them into effect is created previous to the laws, and these laws are submitted to in obedience to this superior force, and not in compliance with any expression of the will of the people. Devices, like popular assemblies and representative bodies, to obtain the concurrence of large masses of the people, either in the enactment or maintenance of laws and institutions, are always the offspring of an advanced state of civilisation. Even then they are always very imperfect manifestations of this sovereign will. A large portion of the people—often a majority—are constantly compelled to obey laws from which they dissent, and which they consider either as contrary to their reason or to their interest. Even in the most democratic communities the sovereign authority naturally and inevitably lapses into the hands of a few. The ‘wire-pullers,’ as the Americans call them, are the real governors of the nation, and the great mass is always inert, except so far as it is put in motion by the efforts of the more active and intelligent members. It is of the essence of all democratic governments that the will of the majority shall coerce that of the minority. But majorities and minorities are often very evenly balanced, even as regards actual numbers and; what is the condition of a minority numerically but slightly inferior to its opponents, and possibly very superior to it in intelligence and in wealth? What is the state of a people just issuing out of a civil war, and of which a large

proportion are held in subjection by force of arms and the right of conquest? The most ordinary experience of the temper and opinions of a people demonstrates that nothing can be more fluctuating, variable, and transitory than the will of a people. It varies from day to day, almost from hour to hour. In France it was recently Imperialist; at the late elections held during the civil war it was Monarchical, and it is now said to be drifting towards Republicanism. Again: towards what description of Republicanism it is drifting seems to be very doubtful—whether that of M. Thiers, which appears to be a sort of life Dictatorship, or that of M. Gambetta, which leans towards the doctrines of Communism. Nothing appears to be more clearly demonstrable than that the equality of mankind is a mischievous chimera, and that the sovereignty of the people is a dangerous sophism, having neither root in the past nor existence in the present. They are both of them destructive of two great influences which bind and uphold society, the principle of stability and the force of cohesion.

Let me here quote a passage from Mr. Burke's immortal essay—'An Appeal from the New to the Old, Whigs':—

'When great multitudes act together, under that discipline of nature, I recognise the PEOPLE. I acknowledge something that perhaps equals, and ought always to guide, the sovereignty of convention. In all things the voice of this grand chorus of national harmony ought to have a mighty and decisive influence. But when you disturb this harmony, when you break up this beautiful order, this array of truth and nature, as well as of habit and prejudice—when you separate the common sort of men

from their proper chieftains, so as to form them into an adverse army, I no longer know that venerable object called the 'people' in such a disbanded race of deserters and vagabonds. For a while they may be terrible indeed, but in such a manner as wild beasts are terrible. The mind owes to them no sort of submission. They are, as they have always been reputed, rebels. They may lawfully be fought with, and brought under, whenever an advantage offers. Those who attempt by outrage and violence to deprive men of any advantage which they hold under the laws, and to destroy the natural order of life, proclaim war against them.'

The whole portion of it from which this extract is taken is among the noblest specimens of his unequalled powers. Perhaps there can be no stronger proof of the force of concentrated will, as contrasted with the scattered and disunited wills of a multitude, than is to be found in the mechanism of an army or of a man-of-war. Here the great object is to obtain the largest amount of effective power, and we find that it can only be obtained by rendering the will of one absolute. All the discipline of ranks and gradations is instituted from the lowest to the highest. Obedience to superiors is the pervading principle; no man must have a will of his own. Everywhere the voice and command of the superior is all-powerful; volition is every where centred in the commanding officer, and yet the result is that the greatest amount of positive force in the whole machine is obtained.

I may mention, in relation to the subject of military organisation, that it is impossible to consider the will of a people as established or paramount in countries such as France and Germany, where so large a pro-

portion of the flower and strength of the population is strictly disciplined, and must obey its officers as an army. The conscription, an institution which we owe to Revolutionary France, first embodied compulsorily a very considerable proportion of the male youth of the State, but the Germans have carried this principle much farther, and the French are following their example. The whole male population of the State between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one are bound to serve as privates in the ranks of the army. After that period they are released upon a sort of furlough, but during several years are still classed and numbered as regiments, are obliged to furnish an account of their domicile, are enrolled under experienced officers, and are liable to be called into active service at the shortest notice. The whole effective strength of the nation thus is formed into an army, and bound to render to its officers that blind obedience which is of the very essence of military organisation. We in England are not perhaps very accurately informed upon the subject of the composition of the German armies, but it may be conjectured that, although the men are only actually embodied in time of peace for three years, that the officers constitute a permanent body ; and should this be the case, and should they be so well instructed and efficient as is reported, the mere circumstance of the men being only enlisted for terms of three years will not detract from their efficiency or give the force anything of the loose character of a National Guard or a Volunteer corps. Permanent officers, armed

with full authority to enforce a strict discipline, will make an efficient army out of youths only enlisted for three years quite as capable of duty as if they were embodied for a longer period. Two consequences follow from this conversion of a nation into a camp. A people so brigaded under officers cannot be considered as free. Probably the soldiers are as thoroughly subject to the command of their officers, and have as little free will of their own, as the negroes in our West Indies and the Southern United States had before their emancipation; and in no sense whatever, among a nation so governed, can the will of the people be considered as the sole source of authority. The will of the general must always be, practically, superior to the will of the people.

The conclusions to which I arrive by this review of the shifting drama of French history during the past eighty-three years are, first of all, that the principles and policy of the first French Revolution were *ab initio* utterly false and mistaken; secondly, that had they been contented to follow the example of England, they had all the materials with which to construct a durable constitutional monarchy, composed, as ours was, of the monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements in due proportion to each other. But when they began by involving all the upper ranks of French society in one common proscription, they inflicted a mortal wound on the integrity of the nation. They broke up and destroyed its social existence. The French national existence was rent into pieces. The liberty they professed to found

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became impossible under such a state of things. Misrule and anarchy reigned universally until merged into the military sway of the first Napoleon. That great sovereign restored social order, but in doing so he destroyed all vestiges of political liberty. Thirdly, the reigns of the Bourbon and Orleans sovereigns were an attempt to establish constitutional monarchy somewhat on the English plan in France. They have unhappily failed, principally because the first French Revolution shook society to pieces, and destroyed that Aristocratic portion of it without which constitutional monarchy cannot exist. Fourthly, the Revolution of 1848 abundantly showed that the powerful party of Jacobins had survived all the storms of the first French Revolution. Under the new appellation of Red Republicans and Communists, all their distinctive doctrines, all the wild anarchical principles which they professed with the utmost fervour of political fanaticism, reappeared. They embodied them in three great principles: first, they waged war not only against kings, but against every distinction of classes, and proclaimed a universal equality; secondly, in order to effect this they seek to abolish the institution of property itself, to make the State the sole proprietor, and all its citizens labourers for the good of the whole; thirdly, they utterly deny all religious truth. They may possibly permit individuals to act upon their private convictions, but they suppress all public worship of the Deity; and it is not surprising that such a fearful creed led to the bloodiest civil strife.

The first great attempt of the Communists was made in June 1848, and was then crushed by General Cavaignac with stern military severity. The whole French people were driven by these excesses to seek refuge in the revival of the Empire. They had willingly abandoned constitutional privileges to obtain protection in the enjoyment of those first rights necessary to the existence of society. A long period of internal tranquillity, security and progress followed. Never during all the phases of successive Governments since 1789, never among all the tentative endeavours to establish republics and constitutional monarchies, has France been so prosperous, so progressive, so happy in the enjoyment of order and security as during the reign of Napoleon III. It is perfectly true that all these blessings of good government were obtained under an absolute rule. The whole current of public opinion in England, France, and America is opposed to such an admission, yet the fact remains, personal and individual liberty was more safely and securely enjoyed under Napoleon III. than under the uncertain and precarious Governments which preceded and have followed it. Englishmen, lovers of the old British Constitution of King, Lords and Commons, and of Church and State, will accord an immense superiority to our form of government; but this is not the comparison which is instituted. It is between the second Empire and the various forms of government which have succeeded the great convulsion of 1789. At that crisis vast experiments were attempted, both in

the political and social systems which had previously existed. They were at that time novel experiments; and although the wisest statesmen and philosophers foresaw and denounced their false and hollow character, yet at that time they were untried. They were prodigal in promises of astounding benefits to the human race, and they enlisted in their favour many of the generous sympathies of ardent and sanguine spirits. But they are no longer novelties or untried experiments. The French have had eighty years' experience of their disastrous results; and here, in the year 1872, we have only to contemplate the sad spectacle of the ruin in which they have involved the French nation. All government is provisional, all constitutions exist only from day to day.

Napoleon III. is constantly attacked for having established the Empire by a *coup d'état*; but what are all these successive changes of Government in France but a series of *coups d'état*? Are no *coups d'état* ever accomplished but by military chiefs, emperors, or presidents? What were the 'Glorious Three Days of July 1830' but a *coup d'état* against the throne of Charles X? What was the great revolt of the Republicans at the funeral of General Lamarque, in June 1832, but an abortive attempt at a *coup d'état*? What was the insurrection of 1848, which overthrew the monarchy of King Louis Philippe, but a *coup d'état* of the chiefs of the populace of the Faubourg St.-Antoine? What was the great insurrection against the Assembly and the Provisional Government in June of the same year but another defeated

attempt at a *coup d'état*? And what was the overthrow of the Empire, after the defeat of Sedan, but another *coup d'état* of the mob of Paris? It is very convenient and easy to characterise all these revolutions as mere involuntary and spontaneous outbursts of the popular sentiment; but every one of them was planned and executed under the command of popular leaders, and the whole history of France during the last eighty years is that of a series of *coups d'état*. Two of them, that of the 18 Brumaire and the 2nd December, were accomplished by the aid of the army, but all the rest by the armed and partially disciplined mob of the Faubourgs.

I cannot but observe with astonishment that it is reported that the Assembly and the seat of government is to be brought back from Versailles to Paris. It is inconceivable that, untaught by so many Revolutions, any government seeking to give to the executive power security against popular outbreaks, should not perceive the immense advantage of maintaining their present position at Versailles. Almost the first act of violence in 1789 was the transfer of the Royal Family from Versailles to Paris on the 5th and 6th October. By that step they obtained possession of their persons, and held them afterwards as prisoners or hostages till the catastrophe of 1792. Versailles is within twelve miles of Paris, and connected with it by two railways, one on the north and the other on the south side. The splendid and deserted palace offers every accommodation for the Assembly and the Ministry. All the departments

of government could be perfectly well established there. Versailles, so closely connected with Paris, would be quite as convenient a central site of power for all official purposes as Paris itself, but Versailles would no longer be at the mercy of a popular outbreak. The mob of Paris are very formidable to all but a considerable army, in their narrow streets so easily fortified with barricades. But they lose all their peculiar local advantages the moment they quit the walls. They cannot manœuvre like a regular army. They are exposed to be outflanked and assailed by artillery. They must pass Mont Valérien or some of the other forts, which they must leave in their rear, and in advancing from the northern side they would have to pass the same. All these obstacles would be insuperable to a mere mob if resolutely opposed by a comparatively small military force. La Villette, Belleville, and the Faubourg St.-Antoine would cease to overawe the Government.

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It would seem, however, that even the most moderate politicians regard with a certain complacency this power of insurrection in the last resort. They still identify this miserable succession of sanguinary outbreaks, Provisional Governments, Constituent Assemblies, which never constitute anything, and Republics which crush freedom and frighten the whole nation at the very name, and cling to the vain shadow of popular sovereignty. They have a certain sympathy with the means which have brought about these calamitous results, and cannot shake off the illusions which associate these democratic

uprisings with a noble assertion of the rights of humanity. What are the prospects of the country? If there is one truth more certain than another, it is that everything is provisional. The Republic is provisional, the Assembly is provisional, the Ministry is provisional, M. Thiers is provisional—there is not left standing in all France a single institution to which men cling, a single principle round which the people, or even a fraction of the people, can rally. In such a chaos there is but one organisation possessing stability left. The army alone still retains unity and force. It seems about to embody in its ranks the whole effective male population of the country. Its discipline is to be improved, which means that it is to be taught to obey, and this is the solitary exception to all the rest of the nation. Nobody in France respects anything or obeys anybody; but everybody cannot obey; there must be some who command, and whoever does command the army must be the master of France.

There is, however, another important element in the consideration of the future, a menacing cloud which looms so darkly that it cannot for a moment be lost sight of. Among the long catalogue of provisional questions which I have enumerated above, there is one which dominates the future—Peace is provisional. While the whole nation is brooding over its late reverses, it is also arming to renew the conflict. The French are paying their ransom to the victorious German, and they tax themselves to meet his demands; but they are also increasing,

re-equipping and remodelling their own army with the scarcely disguised purpose of renewing the war. They are thus in this calamitous condition, that they are paying the cost of two armies—one an enormously increased military establishment of their own, the other the military establishments of their enemy, which are designed to overpower their own. It is very hard to be compelled to pay both sides, their own armies and these German hosts; but is not the fact so? Their vast indemnity exacted from the French will be more than sufficient to defray the charges of the economical German army until, at least, they are put in motion. It seems most improbable that these two vast armies can long be kept in inaction, confronting each other, without coming to blows. He would indeed be a prophet who could foretell which is destined to triumph in the deadly contest; but it will be no mere skirmish, it will be a life and death struggle, and on a scale probably exceeding that of former wars. The improvements in military science and the vast numbers engaged tend to render campaigns decisive. If the French should again meet with serious reverses, it is not likely that the Germans will forbear from pushing their advantage to the utmost. If they triumph, they will endeavour to subject all France to the fate of Alsace and Lorraine.

The present military state of Europe is a bitter irony upon all the Utopian chimeras of universal peace, which have met with so many eager partisans in England. This singular hallucination had its

origin in the hostility felt towards the policy of Mr. Pitt and his successors by all the politicians of all shades, whom we may now designate as the great Liberal party. The opposition to Revolution, which was the policy of that great Ministry, was denounced by that party which succeeded them. The triumphs which reflect an imperishable glory upon the English name were thoroughly distasteful to them. Everything built upon these ideas was denounced. Military and naval establishments were proclaimed to be unnecessary, and war itself, like slavery or cannibalism, to be fast becoming an obsolete tradition. Disputes between nations were to be settled by friendly arbitration. The principles of abstract justice were to guide the foreign policy of all civilised nations, and the world was to be attired in a Quaker livery. The lessons of experience are generally read in vain to political fanatics, but it is difficult to understand that the present state of the civilised world should not dispel the dreams of these enthusiasts.

Without dwelling upon America, so lately the scene of a tremendous civil war, and confining our attention to Europe alone, what do we see? A succession of bloody wars desolating Europe during the last twenty years. Novara, the Alma and Inkerman, Magenta and Solferino, Sadowa and Sedan, constitute a list of names which are well worthy of being added as a supplement to Professor Creasy's 'Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World.' Over the whole continent of Europe immense military establishments are everywhere extending themselves,

comprising the total population of the countries. Every male either is or was or is to be a soldier. Never in the history of the world does the military element bear so large a proportion to the rest of mankind. Nor has the warlike principle made less advance in the science than in the numbers of armies. The immense improvements both in the range and in the precision both of small arms and of artillery have altogether changed the whole practice of war. The extension and multiplication of railways create new facilities for the movement and concentration of troops. In a few years the countless hosts of Russia may be brought by rail in a comparatively short space of time from all her vast dominions, and concentrated on any point to take part in the contests of Europe. The conditions of naval warfare are shifting with as great rapidity. Everything connected with these two services is in a state of transition, and it is impossible to foresee what changes may ultimately be wrought in the state of the world by these causes. One fact may be safely assumed, that so far from there being the slightest symptom of the decline in war, or of the diminution in the weight and importance which the sword will exercise in human affairs, everything seems to point to its ascendancy becoming more predominant and more universal. Liberal politicians of a sanguine temperament look forward to counterbalancing effects of public opinion of popular assemblies and of the representative system to control this growing ascendancy of the military element.

Such is not the lesson which past experience teaches us. When armies of such overwhelming force are arrayed against each other in the field, or are marshalled for the attack and defence of some great principles, they will never permanently obey the civil power ; their leaders feel that they are the real masters of the situation, and civil powers have been swept away before them like chaff before the wind. The strength which exists in old and firmly constituted societies, where each class and each interest is a little power in itself, may form some sort of counterpoise to this power ; but where the tide of revolution has swept over a country and levelled all these natural barriers no such check exists, and there seems nothing to prevent the assumption of supreme authority by the first successful general. Whatever may be the apparent fusion of popular forms of government, political liberty and individual freedom are quite incompatible with this predominance of the military element. Wherever the real authority of the State rests, there it will eventually make itself felt, and no such institutions of a Liberal character are other than a mockery and a snare in the presence of this tremendous array of military force.

Is there anything in the present social or political condition of France to neutralise this force? It would appear, on the contrary, that whoever attempts to forecast the future of that country—whichever of the parties into which the nation is divided looks forward to success—must ultimately calculate upon

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the employment of the sword. Does M. Thiers hope to preserve his authority during his life, or to extend it to some pointed successor as the inheritor of his policy? How can it be maintained, or how can that transfer be effected except by military support? The Comte de Chambord may be contented patiently to wait for the spontaneous revival of the old French sentiment of loyalty to the House of Bourbon; but those who have less confidence in the principle of divine right will come to the conclusion that this passive attitude in a man of fifty is one better suited to resignation than to hope, and that a leader who never moves, and whose whole policy seems to consist in waiting the advent of a miracle, is not likely to heal the disorders of his country. Yet the results of the elections in 1848 and in 1870 prove that the Legitimist principle has still great latent strength in France, and could the spirit of Henry IV. suddenly animate the body of the Comte de Chambord, it is by no means impossible that such a chief might yet exercise a preponderating influence in the present disordered state of France. But, clearly, the Bourbon cause is more in want of a hero than of a saint.

The Orleanists, like the elder branch of the Bourbons, appear contented to wait events. They have never lately exhibited a spark of energy, and would appear likely to be divided in the future between the *quasi* legitimist claims of the Comte de Paris and the personal pretensions of the Duc d'Aumale, if he were ever inclined to put them forward. The Comte de Paris's latest declaration appears to point to his deferring his

claims until time shall have disposed of those of the Comte de Chambord. He waits upon a Prince and a party already waiting itself upon the chances of the future. This doubly passive *rôle* does not afford a very promising prospect of ultimate ascendancy. The various gradations of Republicanism, Right Centres, Left Centres, rest upon no solid basis of conviction. None of these parties have the least confidence in their own truth or stability. They only acquiesce in a republic to-day because they can see no other form of government to rest upon; but they care nothing for a republic, they have no enthusiasm for one, they would never fight for one or die for one; the majority would rejoice to be decently rid of it.

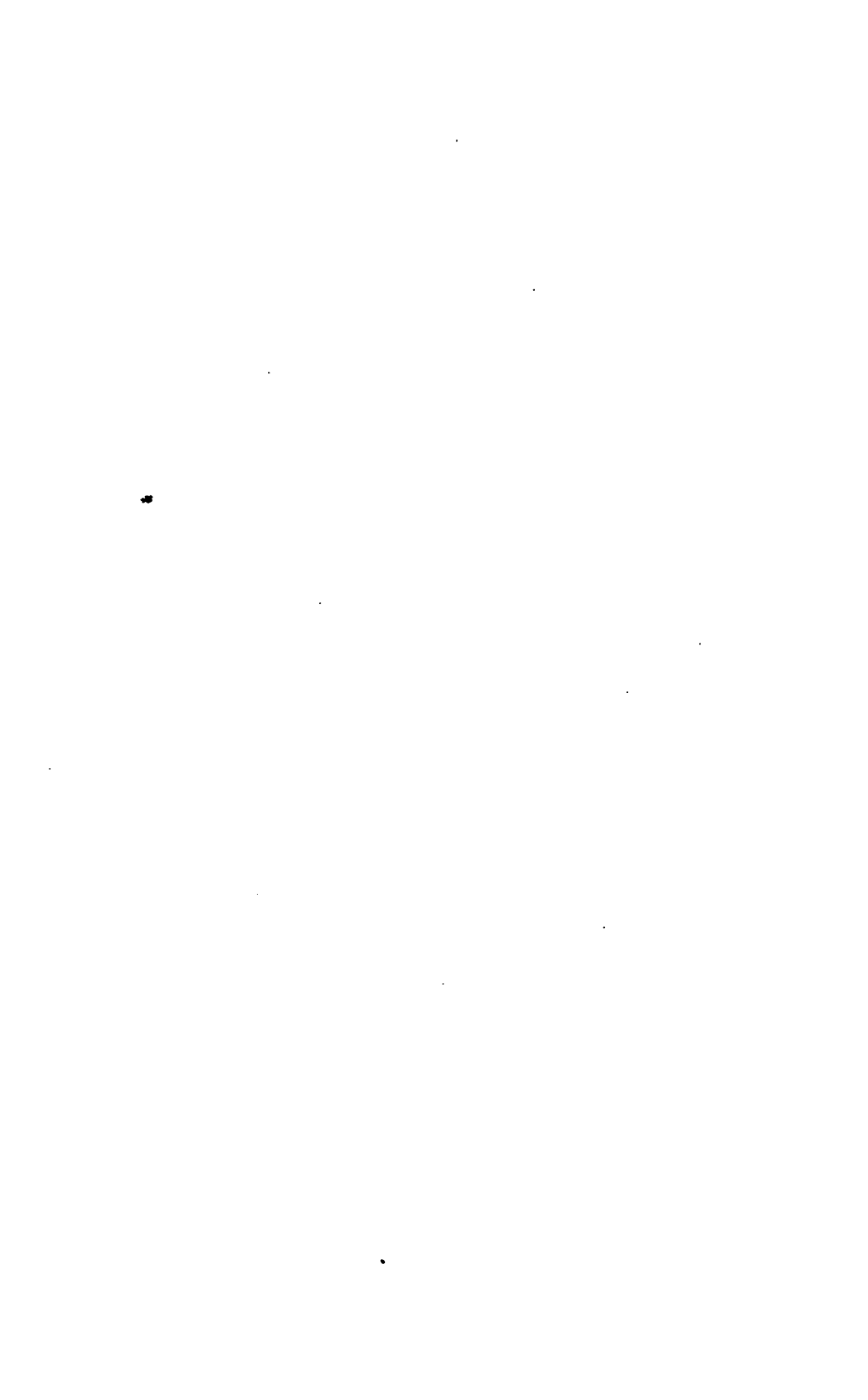
The real admirers of the Gambetta or ultra-Gambetta school are perfectly in earnest, and are ready to descend into the streets to-morrow if they saw an opening; but their republic is the Red Republic, that of Robespierre and the Jacobins. It has no support in the nation, but is an object of terror and aversion to the mass of people outside the walls of Paris. Were it successful for a moment—which is quite possible in the present disorganised state of France—it would only call into existence immediately that ultimate resort to military force which is the inevitable end of all anarchical convulsions. M. Thiers' wonderful exhibition of dexterous statecraft extorts a tribute of admiration. Without one single political principle on which to base his power, he has contrived, like a political Blondin, to tread safely on his dizzy height by balancing all these conflicting parties, each

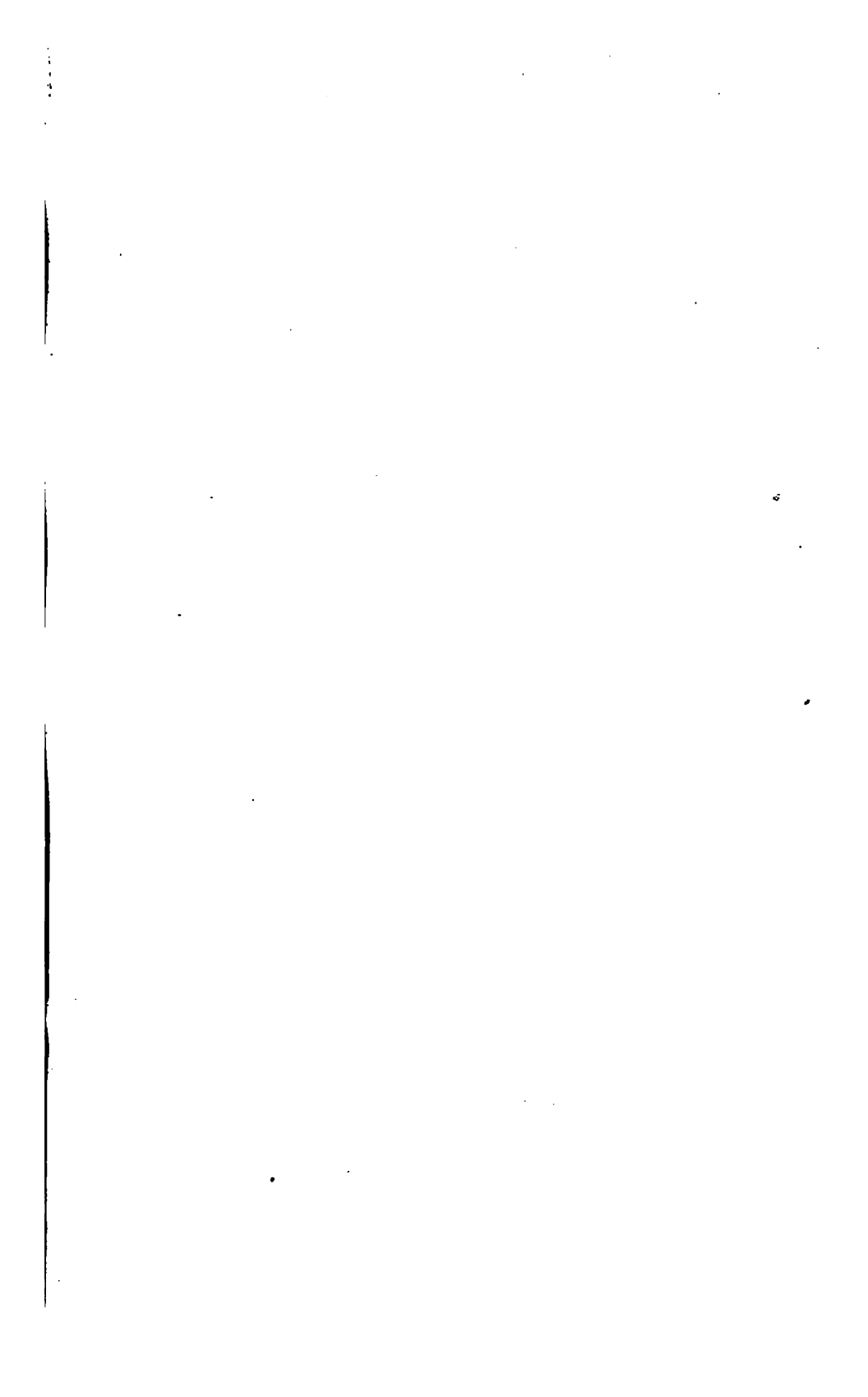
dreading the other. But political Blondins do not found dynasties or constitutions when they are 75. M. Thiers himself has probably neither the purpose nor the hope of bequeathing to France a form of Government which shall endure beyond his own life.

In considering the history of France during the last eighty-three years, let us apply to it the principles of that philosophical induction, of that experimental philosophy which, since the days of Bacon, has guided mankind to truth and taught it to avoid or to correct error. Let us look around and watch the development of those sciences which have changed the face of the world. We shall find that they have all originated in sound deductions, carefully drawn from admitted facts and verified by the test of experiment.

The true philosopher never clings pertinaciously to theories falsified by experience. He concludes that however specious may be the reasoning, however seductive the premises, some fallacy lurks underneath which vitiates all his conclusions. We trace this process going on all around us in every branch of science. In medicine, in chemistry, in mechanics, how many abortive schemes, how many erroneous theories, presenting at their commencement the fairest prospect of success and capturing the imagination of enthusiastic men by the brilliancy of their promises, have, on being subjected to the test of trial, utterly exploded. But in these cases it usually happens that men do not cling to them

with bigoted obstinacy after their fallacy has been demonstrated. The appeal is, in the first instance, made to calm reason, and if the verdict of experience is unfavourable the scheme is abandoned. Why not apply the same crucial test to the French Revolution, which was the most gigantic and novel experiment ever made in politics or social economy. Its leading principle was to discard all that mankind had hitherto adopted—all existing institutions, whether political, social, or religious; to begin to construct everything anew from the very foundation and to mould men into some new form, according to their fanciful notions of ideal perfection. Is the French nation not yet convinced that it is treading in a vicious circle of false theories, involving ruinous consequences? Will they still be the dupes of such vain phrases—the Universal Equality of Man; the Sovereignty of the People; Liberty, Freedom, and the Perfectibility of Mankind—only to tread again the inevitable round of anarchy, bloodshed, and despotism? Will they never learn that laws and institutions must have stability, and that all civilised society naturally resolves itself into a variety of classes, who are required to bind and unite the whole together; that reverence for what is established, and a willing obedience to lawful authority, are sentiments planted in us for wise purposes; that difference of ranks and conditions are essential to a high state of civilisation, and that they must cease to confound two things essentially different, the Advance of Democracy with the Progress of Mankind?







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